Cultivating literacies of access and liberation: A case study on the use of oral language, hybrid literacies, and culture in the 21st century

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ABSTRACT

Cultivating literacies of access and liberation: A case study on the use of oral language, hybrid literacies, and culture in the 21st century

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This multi-year critical ethnographic study examined the development and use of oral languages, and academic, digital, and critical literacies among high school debaters who participated in the Ivy League Debate Institute (ILDI), an intense academic apprenticeship for low-income Black and Brown youth attending public high schools in a large northeastern city. The study documented and analyzed a high school intervention that sought to foster powerful readers, writers, speakers, and engaged citizens through critical debate education that embraces new literacies, critical theory, empirical research, community-based literacies, and Hip-Hop culture. In addition to documenting the language and literacy practices of the majority of students participating in the apprenticeship during an eight week summer workshop, the research also followed a subset of ILDI students over the course of three years as they participated in after school trainings, weekend debate tournaments, public presentations, and researched and practiced at summer debate institutes.

Drawing upon African American literacies and rhetoric(s) and sociocultural and critical education theories, this research investigated the role of critical debate in the development of participants' academic literacies, civic engagement, and identities. A sociocultural lens that views learning as changing participation over time in communities of practice (Lave, 1991) was used to analyze a wide range of data: field notes and researcher memos from after school meetings and events; video recordings of meetings, public presentations and debate tournaments; online correspondence; student generated speeches, academic essays and research notes; and semi-structured interviews with participants elucidating on the role of the debate apprenticeship in the development of academic and critical literacies.

The study reveals the role of the critical debate apprenticeship in supporting students to become more dexterous users of multiple literacies, languages, and discourses, and to leverage these resources in academic and civic spaces for self- and social justice advocacy. The study expands what counts as academic discourse and literacy development to create more room for cultivating both literacies of access and social justice. Combining student-led instruction in evidence-based advocacy skills and print-based and new literacies with oral language and Hip-Hop can support participants in employing diverse cultural and linguistic practices and academic, new, and critical literacies to develop well-reasoned and persuasive texts that speak to social injustices, offering new possibilities for literacy education in high schools, first-year college classrooms, preservice teacher training, and in out-of-school spaces.

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List of Abbreviations

1A...…First Affirmative Speaker
1AC…First Affirmative Constructive Speech
1AR…First Affirmative Rebuttal Speech
1N….. First Negative Speaker
1NC…First Negative Constructive Speech
1NR…First Negative Rebuttal Speech
2A….. Second Affirmative Speaker
2AC…Second Affirmative Constructive Speech
2AR…Second Affirmative Rebuttal Speech
2N….. Second Negative Speaker
2NC…Second Negative Constructive Speech
2NR…Second Negative Rebuttal Speech
Aff…. Affirmative
CP….. Counterplan
DA…..Disadvantage
FW…. Framework
ELA....English Language Arts
ILDI....Ivy League Debate Institute
K…….Kritik
MC..... Emcee
NCTE. National Council of Teachers of English
Neg….Negative
T…….Topicality
UDL... Urban Debate League
USFG.United States federal government

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Dedication

Dedicated to our young scholars, leaders, and activists—our future.

Chapter One: Introduction to the Research

Statement of Need

Recognizing the centrality of literacy for shaping life possibilities, for being able to eradicate poverty, realize gender equality, establish sustainable development, reduce child mortality, and promote peace and democracy in an increasingly globalizing world, the United Nations General Assembly declared the period between 2003 and 2012 to be the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNESCO, 2005), a decade for "Literacy as Freedom," a decade in which literacy is recognized as a human right to be championed toward education for all. Included in the vision was an emphasis on establishing stronger connections between formal and informal education and also between policy design and practice. Among the 129 countries providing data for the decade, the conviction is clear: the importance of literacy is universal. However, at the end of that decade, United States National Assessment of Educational Progress reported that only 12 percent of Black[1] fourth-grade males were proficient in reading compared with 38 percent of their White counterparts, and Latin@[2] fourth graders in large cities scored 26 percentage points lower than White public school students (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Additionally, in New York City, out of the 1.1 million students served, 44,000 drop out annually (Swanson, 2010). In 2014, 63.8% of New York City's Black students and 61.4% of Latin@ students graduated within four years, compared to 80.7% of White students, while overall, 32.6% of the 2014 graduates met the college readiness index (NYC DOE, 2014). When over 99% of our young people make it into high school and less than one in two students of color make it out in four years, the consequences are serious. High school graduates have a ten year longer life expectancy than non-graduates (Ma, Xu, Anderson and Jemal, 2012; Olshansky, 2012). The latter tend to earn far less than a livable wage; and without the legal economic opportunities to make ends meet, on average, our dropouts will spend more time incarcerated, less time with their families, less time working, and less time as engaged citizens (Alliance for Education, 2011). For those who do graduate, less than one in ten are prepared for college, when parental college attendance, especially for mothers, is a strong predictor of academic performance in primary and secondary education (Dubow, Boxer & Huesmann, 2010; Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997).

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[1] Although I employ *African American* when used by research participants or authors, I generally use *Black*. African American seems to gloss over the differences between voluntary and involuntary immigrants (Ogbu, 1987) with African ancestry. I capitalize Black not to negate the fluidity of Blackness (Gross, 2010), but to recognize its social and political construction (Omi & Winant, 1994). To be sure, I strive to represent every person in the way in which they self-identify.

[2] I use the gender-neutral Latin@ instead of the masculine Latino.

In response to these statistics, in 2012 I established the Ivy League Debate Institute (ILDI), an academic intervention and apprenticeship serving low-income, Black and Latin@ youth in public high schools in a large Northeastern city. Not only was it the first free debate program in the Ivy League, but it brought together a unique team mobilizing around a stated vision: to foster powerful readers, writers, thinkers, researchers, speakers, and change-makers through a relevant, fun and academically rigorous curriculum. Professors, undergraduate college debater and coaches, teaching artists, and high school graduate apprentices, supported students in blending oral language, new literacies, Hip-Hop[3], and academic writing to create original research addressing pressing local, national, and global issues. I observed how students were diving into social and critical theory, historical analysis, research, and actively blending multiple literacies while engaging in lively discussions and debates in which the young scholars demanded they see their cultures, languages, and issues reflected in education and in the larger society. Students presented their critical research at public debates, academic conferences, and weekend debate tournaments hosted by colleges, universities, and high schools around the country.

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[3] The capitalization of Hip-Hop signifies how it is a culture.

This intellectual and cultural labor informed my interest in better understanding and supporting the myriad ways in which young scholars learn and make meaning in the world through the development and generative use of multiple literacies, languages, and texts. As an educator who has always been committed to developing an understanding of what, why and how something strengthens a young scholar's ability to critically comprehend and wield words powerfully, and on reflecting on my own engagement with sociocultural theory, New Literacies Studies, and critical education theories, I saw the importance of systematically documenting and analyzing the broader pedagogical implications of the debate intervention for the field of English language arts, the domain entrusted with cultivating strong readers and writers, as well as speakers and listeners—the *literacies of access* to higher education, remunerative and rewarding employment, and civic spaces. Yet while access to higher education, employment and civic spaces can also mean entering into profoundly unjust, unequal, and oppressive spaces, I was also committed to thinking about English as a discipline that can simultaneously cultivate *literacies of liberation*. With access and liberation in mind, I was interested in studying what could be learned from the ways in which students in the debate apprenticeship were developing and using language and literacies and how that might expand our understanding of and ability to attend to the new literacy demands facing students and teachers of English in the 21st century. As the status quo is marked by civic pluralism and global connectedness, with classrooms that are increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse, and with new technologies that are growing exponentially, the field of English education is faced with responsibility to be reflexive and critically attentive to what these changes mean for teaching English. We must continuously seek to develop a deeper and more texturized understanding of the new literacies and various language practices that our students need to be able to critically consume and use in order to thrive—and *survive*—in our changing times when oral language and digital technologies and spaces can be wielded to spread islamophobia, hate, misogyny, transphobia, adultism, anti-Blackness, xenophobia, patriarchy, and unfettered free-market capitalism, all of which can also used as turbo fuel for presidential candidates and as warrants for ignoring abject poverty and gender inequality, or for the murder, deportation, imprisonment and torture of Black and Brown children and adults.

And while I argue that teachers need to know how to cultivate literacies of access and liberation, we must also be aware of the new literacies and language practices that our students are already engaging that could be invited into the classroom and strengthened, built upon, and extended so that our students can expand the discourses in which they are conversant—or converse in—and access the spaces in which they can critically and powerfully navigate and leverage words in the world in such a way that can position our youth as public intellectuals, creative cultural producers, and strong advocates for themselves and for social justice. To this end, as English educators, we should reflexively learn what students already know or need to know in order to expand their capacity to develop, critically engage, negotiate and leverage myriad literacies, languages, cultures, identities, and digital technologies both academically and in the larger society.

While the Common Core State Standards explicitly include speaking and listening as components of literacy, albeit without any formal method of assessment, and while oral language and debate were prominently located in the study of English in the latter part of the 18th century and throughout the 19th century, today, oral language is no longer situated in English departments and it is rarely afforded its own course of study in English, whether that be in secondary schools or in English education programs for preservice teachers. Independent of standardized assessments and top-down curricular mandates, oral language proficiency is among one of the many literacies needing more attention in the 21st century. Oral language is frequently a prominent feature in the rapidly growing multimodal texts in a digital age that are being used to market, advertise, inform, compare, contrast, persuade, spread ideology, and mobilize populations socially, culturally and politically. The ability to critically consume, analyze, and produce multimodal texts and leverage oral language in combination with various modes and mediums available to produce, reproduce, or deconstruct knowledge, is increasingly important across industries, trades, and political projects, whether one is a small business owner, a community organizer, a teacher, a leader, someone looking for employment, or someone trying to decide how to vote or what cause to support. Furthermore, against the backdrop of globalization, civic pluralism, linguistic and cultural diversity, and the rapid rate of technological growth and changes in digital spaces, in order to participate in the global economy (or criticize it for that matter) and a global citizenry, there is a serious need for people to have a fuller range of literacies and language skills in order to be able to do the requisite sophisticated conceptual work which involves seeking out, critiquing, and synthesizing a tremendous amount of information thoughtfully and critically, seeing the big picture(s), reading between the lines, asking the right questions, and being able to think critically and communicate and collaborate effectively within and across different physical and virtual settings, texts, spaces, discourse communities, and cultures.

Research Questions

Given that scope I drew upon research about debate education and situated this work in the field of English language arts, African American literacies and rhetoric(s), and sociocultural and critical theories of language, teaching and learning, and developed three guiding questions for my critical ethnographic research about the Ivy League Debate Institute:

1. What is the role of the debate apprenticeship in the development students' academic literacies? What types of academic literacies are students learning, building upon and seeking to develop in debate? How do they develop these literacies and what do they do with them academically?

2. What is the role of the debate apprenticeship in the development students' civic engagement? What types of literacies are students learning, building upon, seeking to develop, and using for civic engagement?

3. What is the role of the debate apprenticeship in students' growing identities[4]? Specifically, what new and evolving roles and responsibilities do students assume over time in the same community of practice?

This research is intended to better understand the opportunities available and challenges to strengthening students' academic and critical literacies in a way that builds upon, fortifies and extends the language and literacy practices that our young scholars bring with them into educational spaces. On a basic level, I sought to learn from myriad language and literacy practices our young people are engaging outside of school to locate untapped possibilities within literacy and English language arts education to foster powerful readers, writers, thinkers, speakers and engaged civic actors who can critically engage within and across different academic, professional, and civic spaces with justified confidence in their linguistic, intellectual, and cultural wealth and as members of critical intellectual communities of practice with a sense of responsibility to inform and shape a vibrant democracy.

Significance of Study

To further explain the significance of the study and its relevance to the field of English language arts (ELA), in what follows in this chapter is the background of the study beginning with a brief history of debate and oral language in ELA, from the 18th century up to the present.

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[4] I ask and answer this question socioculturally. See discussion of Lave (1996) in chapter two (p. 83).

A brief history of debate. The history of debate and English language arts dates back to the late 18th century. At Yale, the first introduction of English grammar, language and composition into the curriculum appeared in 1767. In the following year students established a literary and debating society. Nine years later, tutors offered seniors formal instruction in belles lettres. In 1817, Yale established the Professorship of Rhetoric and Oratory, which became the Professorship of Rhetoric and the English Language in 1839, and Rhetoric and the English Literature in 1863. Brown University had a parallel trajectory. Brown University became "Brown" in 1804, changing its name from Rhode Island College, after a graduate, Nicholas Brown, provided the college with a generous donation of five thousand dollars to establish the first professorship in oratory and belles letters. As of 1803, Harvard's professorship was merely in rhetoric and oratory, as was the same for Yale in 1817. Regardless of the different definitions of oratory or belles letters, there was one similar through line: English literature was a means to use the English language to promote "verbal decorum, morality, or taste" (Scholes, 1998, p. 4) and a substantial examination of the rhetoric of public speaking was to prepare college graduates for work in the clergy and government participation. Compositions were tailored for public orations; the content and oratorical forms were primary, as compositions weren't for publication but for public oration and persuasive speaking: "there is no evidence that the teachers of two centuries ago really cared much about how writing looked. They were oriented to the oral performance itself and regarded the written texts primarily as rough drafts of the real thing: the oration" (Scholes, 1998, p. 6). Furthermore, debating societies flourished in the American colonies, to such a degree that with the numerous editions of debating manuals "spoken deliberation became inseparable from the ability to read" (Kaiser, 2009, p. 319).

Over the course of the 19th century, as literature and composition took a more prominent position in English, and also while speech and rhetoric were becoming the domain of a new discipline outside of English, in the 1920s through the 1940s, in a review of literature in *The English Journal,* several articles appeared that highlighted the importance of oral language and debate in English language arts in motivating and supporting students in their development of essential public speaking, writing, and reading skills (Carroll, 1931; Hoover, 1930; Kolberg, 1935; Richards, 1920).

In 1920, E.B. Richards, a specialist in English in the New York State Department of Education, wrote in *The English Journal* that debating in American schools should not be limited to a small number of students participating on a team because of its ability to foster oral English. He argued that debate should be open to all students studying English. After two years of conducting interclass debates at Central High School in Syracuse, Richards crowned the school as being a pioneer in the study of oral English because he saw how school-wide debates generated deeper thinking about topics being debated because a large number of students had opportunities to hear and participate in in-depth debates around well-researched issues. Second, he argued that these debates creatively achieved the socialization of oral work, one of the goals of English teaching, because it aroused a sustained interest and participation in debating and oral language work among students without placing additional burdens on teachers; third and fourth year students were positioned as instructors as they held public debates for the entire school (p. 149).

In January of 1922, Marion Jewett Austin wrote a counterargument to the emphasis on oral composition in high school English classes in her article "Oral English and Rhetoric 0".

Reflecting on teaching first-year Rhetoric 0 (the most basic level of rhetoric, which should be read as a zero, not the letter "o") at the University of Illinois, she argued that unlike written texts, oral composition did not offer the instructor the ability to see the grammatical errors in her students' compositions. Austin explained that grammatical errors could only be corrected by instruction in written composition; thus, the focus should be more on the written language than the oral. She blamed the emphasis on oral composition in high school for the poor preparation of college freshmen in written composition (and for the need for a "zero-level" course in rhetoric to begin with). To evidence her claim, she presented a laundry list of errors in the writing of her students: misspelled words, mistakes in capitalization, misused punctuation, incomplete sentences, comma-splices, fragmented sentences, misplaced modifiers, omitting the "s" from pluralized words, and incorrect verb forms, which she attributes to "carelessness" and "ignorance" (p. 16) that ought to be ameliorated in secondary English instruction. Austin surmised that high school teachers could give high marks to a student lacking in the technical features of written composition because "these features were not emphasized; it was possible to satisfy the demands of the course and still remain oblivious to the importance of periods and capital letters" (p. 16). She argued that in large schools, oral composition should be excised from the teaching of English language arts and placed in a separate public speaking class because "the English course has more than enough to do in teaching the pupils to recognize good literature and to express their own thoughts correctly in writing" (p. 17). In smaller schools, oral skills should not be the goal of instruction, but rather a small component in ELA.

While Austin argued that oral language instruction in English classes was at the expense of students' developing mastery over certain features of writing, other teachers were not as quick to dismiss the importance of oral composition and some saw debate as a valuable English method to promote student-driven learning. Herbert A. Carroll (1931) wrote that the competition of debate (preparing to win) creates a unique motivator for learning complex and unfamiliar topics. Margaret Hoover (1930), an English teacher at Staten Island Academy, began her article in *The English Journal* explaining that "The oral English class is rich in untapped reservoirs—untapped because so often it is only the teacher who does the prospecting and she cannot cover all the ground. If the students are allowed to venture alone...they will bring in unpredictable treasures." After she was approached by three first-year boys, asking her to set aside class time to discuss ideas in which they were interested outside of the curriculum, she agreed to let them lead the English class on the following Friday. As a result, she said, "Never was there better attention given to any class performance, nor have I ever seen more sincerity in any student speakers. They were talking of interests that lay near their hearts, and they were eager to carry their audience with them" (pp. 510-511). With the students being positioned in the role of the instructor, freed to organize the lesson around their interests and texts, it uniquely changed the discourse in Hoover's class, captivating students' attention and stimulating original and authentic compositions based on "interests that lay near their hearts" that otherwise would have never surfaced. Hoover claimed that if they had to wait to create and share their compositions until an assignment was handed down by a teacher, that their compositions would have been "strained and artificial" because "An assignment, however inclusive, objectifies composition. The student hunts about for anything that fits" (p. 511) The class became known as the "English Club," with filled with impassioned research and speeches, and with students taking ownership over their work, from creating plays to staging dinner conversations and from creating broadcasts to creating mock trials. Hoover ended her article by stating, "a small amount of self-initiated pleasurable activity is more instructive than many hours of directed compulsory training. ‘The hours that make us happy make us wise’” (p. 513).

Noting how “90 per cent of all communication is oral” (p. 555), Emery Stoops (1935), former professor emeritus of the University of Southern California Rossier School of Education, was a strong proponent of speech and designed a high school oral English class based on life-experiences. The curriculum focused on oral composition and interpretation, and preparation and delivery (p. 555). The aims of the course were to promote clear thinking through reading comprehension, and analysis and synthesis, the skills from which could be used in everything from telephone and dinner conversations, to persuasive speeches, employment interviews, extemporaneous speaking, conversations about newspaper articles, films and radio addresses, and discussions about historical and current events and ideas, because “Better conversation should be the aim of every oral English activity. Vocabulary-building, extensive reading, and voice control enrich conversation and must, therefore, thread through every unit” (p. 556). Although Stoops’ focus was more on informal conversation than formal oratory, he reported positive results in terms of literacy development. When testing his students in reading and vocabulary, they scored far above the standard median. Yet he also noted the limitations of his assessment (and assessment in general) because “No scales have been devised to weigh the value in social and aesthetic appreciation of radio, oral interpretation, extensive reading in current literature, and all the other phases of everyday living” (p. 561). Regrettably, and likely applicable to current standardized assessments, Stoops said that “The greatest values of this course-social consciousness, aesthetic appreciation, and emotional enrichment-were unmeasured and at present unmeasurable” (p. 561).

Going beyond what is traditionally assessed in a formal English class, after teaching a one-semester high school oral English class for first-year's, Kolberg (1935) surveyed her students and asked: "Which part of this English course have you found to be most helpful to you? Give reasons for your choice" (p. 310). Every response she reported in her article published in *The English Journal* referred to the aspect of learning how to speak publicly. Only five of the 90 complete answers said that the beginning of the course on written English was the most helpful. In light of these findings, and in response to arguments in the same vein as Austin's (1922), Kolberg concluded that if oracy was a skill found to be particularly helpful to students, then English teachers trained in speech should teach a full course on oral English in the second semester of a student's first year of high school, not as "scattered units in rhetoric courses" that fail to provide curricular coherence, adequate time for students to develop skills in oral language, and sustained opportunities for teachers to measure student progress (pp. 312-313).

Yet by the 1980s, there was a shift in the conversation about oral language and debate. Michael McGough (1988) wrote about the "decline of debate" in the 1980s and the loss of its quality as a spectator event because of the way in which the activity evolved into a simulated game of fantasy reliant upon a specialized discourse divorced from the real world. He attributed the dwindling spectators to the "machine-gun delivery" of the rapid jargon-laden speech—"the spread"—delivered by a speaker who is presumably more interested in winning over a solitary judge, who is also inducted into the specialized discourse, than an audience. McGough argued that conventions of the new style of debate in the 1980s supplanted oratorical fluency and persuasion. For example, he lamented how the expression of a "disadvantage" to the adoption of a new policy has been abbreviated in competitive debate to a "D.A." (his frustration in lexical abbreviations sounding familiar to the frustrations expressed by adults in the 21st century about youth texting “LOL” as an abbreviation of “laugh-out-loud”). He argued that quantity trumps quality in these new specialized debates and has no relevance to the oral skills necessary for meaningful participation in civic life.

Yet there were other critiques of competitive debate around demographics and equity in the activity.

Urban Debate Leagues. Dating back to the early 1900s, the activity of debate has been marked by a unique challenge with recruiting debaters of color, especially those who are poor, low-income and of African descent. Albeit “recruitment” was not necessarily the issue in the early 20th century: the national honorary debate society officially barred Blacks from participating (as well as anyone who was not a White male) up until around 1936 when the University of Vermont and Bates College responded by staging a protest. Toward the latter half of the 20th century, despite some thriving programs in urban public schools with large numbers of Black students participating in debate in the late 1970s, with the rollbacks in social spending, the absence of Black debaters became particularly acute as most debate programs at urban public schools vanished.

In light of the decline of public school debate programs, in 1985 Emory University’s debate team, under the guidance and impetus of their coach, Melissa Maxcy Wade, received a five thousand dollar grant to begin an outreach program to provide debate training and opportunities to urban high schools in Atlanta for three years (Mezuk, 2009; Reid-Brinkley, 2008). In 1997, with seed funding from the Open Society Institute, Emory’s initiative grew into a nation-wide education reform movement known as Urban Debate Leagues (UDLs) that currently exist in 22 cities. The Leagues’ mission was to use debate to counter the educational opportunity gaps between predominantly White, suburban, and affluent schools, and their poor and low-income public school counterparts serving predominantly Black and Brown students, which reflects a history of racial segregation and racist assumptions about the biological inferiority of non-Whites (Hernstein & Murray, 1994), massive income disparities between Whites on the one hand and Blacks and Latin@s on the other (OECD, 2010) coupled with residential segregation and White flight excising large amounts of income tax dollars in Black and Latin@ neighborhoods—funds upon which all public schools depend.

At weekend tournaments around the country young people from urban and suburban schools pour into classrooms to engage in a rigorous intellectual battle over ways to address pressing problems domestically and globally. Each debate round consists of two 2-person teams, typically from two different high schools, one of which will represent the *affirmative* side of the debate, and the other the *negative*. The teams will debate the advantages and disadvantages of the affirmative team's policy, or advocacy, pertaining to the annual national high school policy debate topic around a domestic or foreign policy issue. Given the amount of research, reading, thinking, and writing students must do in order to compete in these 90-minute[5] evidenced-based debate "rounds" it is not surprising that the leagues are credited with significantly improving academic literacies, civic participation and fostering self-confidence. Participation in competitive academic high school policy debate is linked to improvements in test scores, grades, reading comprehension, critical thinking skills, lowering achievement gaps between populations, reducing discipline referrals and promoting college attendance (Erwin, 2001; Hoover, 2003; Luong, 2000; Morris, 2002). In 2009, the *Journal of Negro Education* published a study spanning from 1997-2006, which followed 458 African American male debaters in the Chicago

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[5] There is a total of 64 minutes of speaking in each debate round. The rest of the 90 minutes consists of preparation time and the judge's oral critique. For a more detailed breakdown of the structure of a competitive high school policy debate round, see the section in this dissertation—"*Prep Time" Before Findings Chapters*—which immediately follows chapter three.

Urban Debate League (UDL). Analyzing enrollment, demographic, attendance and achievement records from the Chicago Public Schools and tournament data from the Chicago UDL, the study found that debate participants are 70% more likely to graduate, three times less likely to drop out, and more likely to score at or above the ACT benchmarks for college readiness in English and reading compared to those who did not debate (Mezuk, 2009, p. 290). The *Journal's* report concluded by saying that participation in debate for underserved youth, especially African American young men, may be an effective means to improve secondary literacy and thus overall academic performance outcomes.

In addition to benefiting students directly, in a special issue of *The English Journal* devoted to extracurricular and co-curricular English, Lynette Williamson (2007), a twenty-two-year veteran high school English teacher and forensics coach explained how the successful practices developed in forensics coaching can help high school teachers become better teachers:

> Coaching forensics teaches educators how to insist on solid arguments, how to stay focused on student improvement rather than scores, and how to enlist students as peer coaches. Moreover, coaching forensics allows educators to network almost weekly with inspirational colleagues from a wide range of districts and disciplines (p. 51).

Williamson wrote about how she applied the argument construction skills she learned in coaching debate to teach students how to construct a persuasive essay under time constraints, including writing for standardized testing. She also used the coaching mantra in debate—"there is a lesson in every loss"—to assist students in her English classes in transforming disappointments over what students might perceive as a "loss" in their performance in composition—a weak transition or shaky thesis in a paper, for example—into an opportunity for developing a deeper understanding of the craft, like how to strengthen the transition or thesis, generating a renewed motivation for reflection, deeper thinking, and sustained practice.

Not only did Williamson feel that coaching made her a better writing teacher, but it also provided her with an entry into a supportive collegiate community of practice that replenished her energy for teaching. At weekend debate tournaments she could meet with teachers across disciplines, including math and science, to learn new approaches to teaching and learning with students during the regular school day. Extolling the virtues of coaching and urging other English teachers to do the same, Williamson explained:

> Coaching forensics has made me a better writing teacher, and it has nourished my need for collegial support, rejuvenating me when I am otherwise parched and on the verge of burnout. This is the inspiration that fuels my commitment to extracurricular forensics, making me grateful that I chose this coaching job and hopeful that more English teachers will do the same (p. 57).

Many argue that the applications of speech and debate skills go beyond just academics. Former debaters, now powerbrokers, have written about how successful participation in competitive academic high school policy debate provides students with a direct pipeline to college and power (Giroux, 2006; Luong, 2001). John Sexton (1994), president of New York University and former dean of NYU's Law School explained: "In some ways debate is superior training to what's offered in some law schools." According to Yale University Professor Minh A. Luong (2000), "There is no better activity that will develop essential academic, professional, and life skills than dedicated involvement in speech and debate." Luong evidenced his claim by noting his research, which cited how in conversations Luong had had with many successful business executives, government leaders, and non-profit directors, that they attributed their success to what they learned in speech and debate:

> Over the years, I have had discussions with many senior executives and managers, nearly all of whom identify effective communication, persuasion, and leadership skills as 'absolutely essential' for success and advancement in their respective organizations. Many of these successful business executives, government leaders, and non-profit directors do not directly attribute their graduate degrees to their own achievements but rather they point to the life skills and work ethic learned in high school speech… One vice president told me that 'my Ivy-League MBA got me my first job here but my forensics experience gave me the tools to be effective which allowed me to be promoted into my present position.' (p. 6)

Critical pedagogue Henry Giroux (2006) contended that UDLs provide a way for young people, especially women and underrepresented races and ethnicities, to develop "high-powered academic skills" as well as the identities, habits of mind, knowledge, and critical literacies that enable them to enter into public discourse as strong and confident advocates and leaders who can dialogue with others and contribute to a more vibrant democracy (p. 229-230).

However, not everyone has equal access to debate and not everyone finds it engaging. Although there is no arguing that since the emergence of UDLs over 200,000 young people have participated in high school debate, those numbers largely represent those who debate locally and many who never debate outside of their school's classrooms (Warner 2005). According to a 2001 study of high school policy debate by sociologist and ethnographer Gary Fine (2001), even with the advent of UDLs, aimed to increase minorities in debate, few actually compete in relation to their overall representation in their respective schools, and among those who do, even fewer advance into the upper echelons of the activity.

Low-income students are at a unique disadvantage at the beginning of the season because they cannot afford the $3000+ tuition to attend three to four week residential national debate institutes hosted by a number of prestigious universities including Northwestern, Dartmouth, Stanford, and Michigan State, to name a few. During these institutes, students work with some of the best debate instructors in the country to research and prepare for the upcoming debate season. During the academic school year, schools with the budget to travel send teams the country to compete at national tournaments hosted on college and university campuses. At these tournaments, high school students compete over the course of at least two days, stay in hotels, meet college recruiters, and network with future employers and power brokers. Advancing to the elimination rounds at these tournaments is the only way to be among the 70 teams who qualify to compete at the most prestigious national tournament of the year at the University of Kentucky, the Tournament of Champions (TOC). Most low-income public schools cannot afford the high entry fees to attend these tournaments, let alone the cost of travel; they are left to compete at small half-day local tournaments at nearby low-income schools, with the full knowledge that there is a much larger and more competitive world of debate that is beyond their reach.

Even for those with financial access, similar to achieving success in compulsory education—which some argue is predicated off of a student's ability to demonstrate mastery in dominant-class cultural norms and linguistic practices (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1997; Carrington, 2001)—success at these nationally competitive and most prestigious tournaments is strongly contingent upon a student's ability to adapt to a particular set of discursive norms, linguistic practices, ideologies, and cultural norms (Reid-Brinkley, 2008; Wise, 2005). At a typical national tournament, students dressed in suits and ties spew technical jargon at warp speed while debating issues that often have no relevance to the lived realities of Black and Brown youth living in poor areas.

Reflecting on his privilege as a white male participating in debate, Tim Wise (2005) writes that competitive debate "is very White, not merely in terms of its demographic, but also in terms of its style, its form, and its content at the most competitive levels. Debate literally exudes Whiteness, and privileges White participants in a number of ways" (p. 32). Consider a more extensive account from Wise about the substance, delivery, jargon, and style of argumentation in competitive debate rounds:

> The substance of the arguments made and the way in which the arguments are delivered also tend to appeal to whites far more readily than to people of color, for whom the style and substance are often too abstract to be of much practical value...The terminology is arcane and only of use in the activity itself, including terms like *topicality, hypo-testing, counterplan, permutation, infinite regression,* and *kritik*. The purpose of competitive debate is essentially, a) to speak faster than your opponents so they will 'drop' one of your arguments, which you will then insist to the judge is the most important issue in the round, and which warrants an immediate ballot in your favor; b) to make sure that whatever the topic, your argument for or against a particular policy can be linked to nuclear war or ecological catastrophe, no matter how absurd the linkage (so, for example, claim that your opponent's plan to extend the retirement age will contribute to global warming); and c) to find the most obscure reference, source, or argument on a given subject, and no matter how ridiculous, use it, because if it's obscure enough, the other team won't know how to respond. (p. 33)

To illustrate Wise's argument (and to jarringly introduce readers to the traditional discourse of competitive academic policy debate, Figure 1 presents an example of an outline of an *affirmative* (or *aff* for short) debate argument, which is fairly representative of the structure and content of a traditional *affirmative* argument, also referred to as a *case*, in academic policy debate. (For a year-by-year, tournament-by-tournament, and sometimes even round-by-round, breakdown of *affirmative* and *negative* (abbreviated as *neg*) policy arguments made by high school academic policy debate teams in tournaments around the United States, see http://debatecoaches.wikispaces.com. For free access to downloads of complete affirmative and negative files on any given national high school policy topic from 2010-2014, including pre-written, structured, evidenced, argument briefs for speeches produced by debate *labs* at summer high school debate camps for academic policy debate hosted at colleges and universities around the country, see: http://www.debatecoaches.org/resources/open-evidence-project.)

For the 2012-2013 national high school policy debate topic—*Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its investment in transportation infrastructure in the United States*—high school debaters from C.K. McClatchy High School in California, John Spurlock and Keenan Harris (who were the 1st place team in high school academic policy debate at the 2013 Tournament of Champions, the Olympics of competitive academic high school policy debate) ran an affirmative argument at the 2013 high school National Debate Coaches Association (NDCA) National Championships, in which they argued that the U.S. federal government should invest in two new Polar-class icebreakers for the U.S Coast Guard, to strengthen the Coast Guard's fleet of vessels conducting research in the Arctic and Antarctic.

In the first eight-minute speech of a debate round, the first *affirmative* speaker (1A), John Spurlock (who was the 1st place speaker in high school policy debate at the 2013 NDCA National Championships) would read his *first affirmative constructive* (1AC) speech (complete with underlined evidence which is not featured in the outline presented in Figure 1). The 1AC begins with a *plan*, written by the high school debaters (although often *plans* are written in concert with or by the debaters' coaches), which is a U.S. federal government policy that the affirmative team will argue should be passed. The rest of the debaters' writing in the 1AC consists of brief taglines, or *tags*, to large, but strategically underlined block quotes from congressional hearings, policy reports, periodicals, and peer-reviewed journal articles. These block quotes are used as supporting evidence for arguments about the importance of passing the affirmative plan. These arguments are organized into several *contentions* detailing various *scenarios* for impending disasters, which are only averted by solving their causes vis-à-vis the passage of the affirmative *plan*. This is where C.K. McClatchy present their first *contention*: *Solvency*. This section of the affirmative argument provides supporting evidence for why the affirmative's plan will be effective in solving the underlying cause behind what is propelling the status quo toward what would otherwise be an unavoidable and calamitous future, the details about which follow in the subsequent *contentions*.

Contention 2 contains the first major *advantage* to passing the plan, which in this case is establishing U.S.-leadership in polar science. As each piece of evidence in the contention is presented, the debaters build their case for why U.S. leadership is indispensable for the future of polar science because the resulting diplomacy "solves for everything" including: *Scenario 1,* which describes how "polar science is key to low temperature biomedical research," which, in the Antarctic, is "key to Live Vaccination," which is "key to solve biowarfare," which is something everyone should care about because "An attack is coming in 5 years;" and "Everything but vaccines fails," which we should *really* care about because "Biowar causes extinction."

Contention 3 "Search and Rescue" argues that "Icebreakers save deteriorating Search and Rescue capabilities in the Arctic." We should care about this because in the first *Scenario,* "U.S. leadership on Search and Rescue is key to reset failing US-Russian relations—allows cooperation on the Arctic." This is important because "The Arctic is critical to reset in overall relations—They fail otherwise." This matters because "Solid US-Russia relations are key to prevent war," which we should care about because as the full tagline to the next piece of evidence reads: "extinction." The case then presents *Scenario 2* about Search and Rescue being "key" to U.S.-Canada relations, which "solve extinction."

Figure 1. Outline of a Traditional Affirmative High School Policy Debate Argument (Spurlock & Harris, 2013)[6]

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[6] Spurlock and Harris (2013) posted this exact outline of their affirmative case on the public National Debate Coaches' Association National Argument List wiki. The two high school debaters posted on the wiki in order to disclose their affirmative argument to other high school policy debate teams around the country, a standard and now usually mandatory practice for any varsity team wishing to compete at a national tournament (a national tournament

Icebreakers 1AC NDCA - Round 3

Plan/Solvency

Plan: The United States federal government should invest in two new polar icebreakers. The United States federal government should ensure that the POLAR SEA remains mission capable and that the POLAR STAR remains available for reactivation.

Contention 1 is solvency –

That solves and nothing else does
Jones 6 (Anita, Ph.D in computer science @ Carnegie Mellon, Director of Defense Research and Engineering for the U.S. Department of Defense 1993-97, researcher & director @ National Academy of Sciences, prof @ U of Virginia, 9/26/6, "POLAR ICEBREAKERS IN A CHANGING WORLD:

AN ASSESSMENT OF U.S. NEEDS", Congressional Testimony,http://www7.nationalacademies.org/ocga/testimony/Polar_Icebreakers_in_a_Changing_World.asp) JPG
RENEWAL OF THE NATION'S POLAR ICEBREAKING [...] agency responsibilities and budgetary authorities.

Science

Contention 2 is Science –

Polar science collapses without the plan – US involvement is key
Falkner 11 (Dr. Kelly, Deputy Director The National Science Foundation Office of Polar Programs, PhD Chemical Oceanography, College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences, Oregon State University, 12/1/11, written testimony,http://transportation.house.gov/hearings/Testimony.aspx?TID=6905) JPG
Chairman LoBiondo, Ranking Member [...] longer-term solution to the nation's icebreaking needs.

Scenario 1 is Science Diplomacy –

US-lead polar science is key to global science diplomacy
Collins 11 (Terry, associate editor of Green Chemistry, prof @ Auckland U, "Founded on science, world cooperation in Antarctica a model for meeting climate, other challenges", 6/16/11,
http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2011-06/cfgs-fos061011.php) JPG
The success of world co-operation [...] decision-making on shared global interests."

Science diplomacy solves EVERYTHING!
Federoff 8 (Nina, science and technology adviser to the Sec of State, http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-110hhrg41470/html/CHRG-110hhrg41470.htm)
Chairman Baird, Ranking Member Ehlers, [...]our allies, to advance U.S. interests in foreign policy.

Scenario 2 is Bioterror –

Polar science is key to low-temperature biomedical research
NRC 7 (National Research Council, "POLAR ICEBREAKERS IN A CHANGING WORLD:An Assessment of U.S. Needs, Committee on the Assessment of U.S. Coast Guard Polar Icebreaker Roles and Future Needs, Polar Research Board, Division on Earth and Life Studies NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES, 2007,http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=11753&page=R1) JPG
Arctic biological research addresses [...] of improved cryopreservation techniques) (NRC, 2004).

Antarctic low temperature biomedical research is key to Live Vaccination
Duplantis et al 10 – (Barry N., 7/14, "Essential genes from Arctic bacteria used to construct stable, temperature-sensitive bacterial vaccines,"
PNAS, http://www.pnas.org/content/107/30/13456.full) 10/18/12 K. Harris
In this study we have exploited the conservation [...] performed without the need for full physical containment.

Antarctica is key
Price 99 – Physics Prof @ UCB (P. Buford, 11/29, "A habitat for psychrophiles in deep Antarctic ice,"http://www.pnas.org/content/97/3/1247.full.pdf) 10/23/12 K. Harris
Microbes, some of which may be viable, have [...] scanning of the veins in ice samples.

Live Vaccination is key to solve biowarfare
Nataro 8 – Medical Professor @ the University of Maryland, Baltimore (James P, 6/30, "A Salmonella-based plague vaccine,"http://www.researchgrantdatabase.com/g/1U19AI056578/) 10/23/12 K. harris
Yersinia pestis is the causative agent of [...] vaccines already in advanced stages of development.

An attack is coming in 5 years
Hylton 10 – NYT Magazine Staff Writer (Wil S, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/30/magazine/how-ready-are-we-for-bioterrorism.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&)
2/13/12 K. Harris
"We spent trillions of dollars in the cold [...] are in thinking about a plague attack in 2018."

Everything but vaccines fails
Hylton 10 – NYT Magazine Staff Writer (Wil S, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/30/magazine/how-ready-are-we-for-bioterrorism.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&)
2/13/12 K. Harris
The debate over vaccine development is by [...] College Station and a biodefense sensor went off, that would be an ideal opportunity for vaccine."

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with this requirement will indicate this on their tournament invitation which is usually posted on one of two websites: tabroom.com or joyoftournaments.com. The outline can be found at: http://debatecoaches.wikispaces.com/2012-2013+-+CK+McClatchy+%28CA%29+-+Keenan+Harris+%26+John+Spurlock#Affirmative

Biowar causes extinction – Only existential risk
Casadevall 12 – Prof @ Department of Microbiology and Immunology and the Division of Infectious Diseases of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine (Arturo, “The future of biological warfare,” Microbial Biotechnology, p. 584-5) 12/2/12 K. Harris
In considering the importance of [...] consequence of natural evolution or bioengineering.

Search and Rescue
Contention 3 is Search and Rescue –

Icebreakers save deteriorating Search and Rescue capabilities in the Arctic
Treadwell 11 (Mead, Lt Governor of Alaska, 12/1/11, congressional testimony, “America is Missing the Boat”,http://housemajority.org/joule/pdfs/27/hjr0034_treadwell_testimony.pdf.) JPG
It moreover required a report from the [...] shipwrecked Selendang Ayu in 2004.

Scenario 1 is Russia –

US leadership on Search and Rescue is key to reset failing US-Russian relations – allows cooperation on the Arctic
Smith 11 (Reginald R., Lt. Col USAF, Issue 62, 3 NDU Press, “The Arctic: A New Partnership Paradigm or the Next "Cold War"?”, http://www.ndu.edu/press/lib/images/jfq-62/JFQ62_117-124_Smith.pdf.) JPG
In defense and protection of the border [...] of U.S. vital interests in the Arctic region.

The Arctic is critical to reset in overall relations – They fail otherwise
Antrim 12 (Caitlyn, executive director of the Rule of Law Committee for the Oceans and ocean policy analyst for the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, 2/29/12, http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/11627/relocating-the-reset-u-s-russian-partnership-in-the-arctic) JPG
In January, when a U.S. Coast Guard [...]recognize that regional leadership will be the key to its success.

Solid US-Russia relations are key to prevent war
Allison 11 (Graham, Director – Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard’s Kennedy School, and Former Assistant Secretary of Defense, and Robert D. Blackwill, Senior Fellow – Council on Foreign Relations, “10 Reasons Why Russia Still Matters”, Politico, 2011, http://dyn.politico.com/printstory.cfm?uuid=161EF282-72F9-4D48-8B9C-C5B3396CA0E6)
That central point is that Russia [...] U.N. Security Council resolutions.

extinction
Corcoran 9 – PhD, Strategic Analyst at the US Army War College (Ed, 4/21, “Strategic Nuclear Targets,”http://sitrep.globalsecurity.org/articles/090421301-strategic-nuclear-targets.htm) 2/12/13 K. Harris
That brings us to Russia, [...] nuclear exchange.

That means we win regardless of probability
Bostrom 5 (Nick, professor of philosophy at Oxford, July, Transcribed from by Packer, 4:38-6:12 of the talk athttp://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/view/id/44, accessed 10/20/07)
Now if we think about what just [...] extinct it should still be a high priority.

U.S. Russian relations solve every impact
CFR Task Force 6 [Council on Foreign Relations Independent Task Force for Russia, Chaired by John Edwards and Jack Kemp, “RUSSIA’S WRONG DIRECTION: WHAT THE UNITED STATES CAN AND SHOULD DO,”http://www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/Russia_TaskForce.pdf]
Since the dissolution of the Soviet [...] with Russia are on a positive track.

Scenario 2 is Canadian Relations –

Search and rescue key to further US-Canada cooperation in the arctic – boosts relations
Anderson 2/3 (Ben, writer @ Alaska Dispatch, http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/us-late-arctic-resources-race-canadians-offer-assist) JPG
For years now, Alaska lawmakers [...] infrastructure for emergency response.”

Relations collapse in the SQ – coop from the plan saves them – This ev is reverse causal
Young 10 (Oran, Senior Fellow of the Center for Northern Studies, 7/28/10,http://www.arctique.uqam.ca/IMG/pdf/Canada_and_the_United_States_in_the_Arctic__Testing_the_Special_Relationship.pdf.) JPG
The Arctic today is recognized as a [...] to handle their arctic concerns.

Canada relations solve extinction
Leblanc 8– former commander of Canadian Forces Northern Area (“Mutual Security Interests in the Arctic,”http://www.cdfai.org/conf2008/PDF/CDFAI%202008%20Conference%20-%20Panel%20One.pdf) 2/16 K. Harris
Global warming is affecting the arctic [...] to work to secure the arctic as this is what good neighbours do.

Arctic environmental destruction causes extinction
WWF 10 (World Wildlife Fund, 12/1/10, “Drilling for Oil in the Arctic: Too Soon, Too Risky,”) 2/16 K. Harris
Planetary Keystone The Arctic and the [...] argues that we do not have them yet and that we should not drill in the Arctic until we do.

Figure 1. Outline of a traditional affirmative argument in competitive high school policy debate argument in competitive academic high school policy debate.

The *negative* team would then present reasons why the judge should not pass the *affirmative’s* plan. The *negative* team could make defensive arguments *on-case* and argue that there aren’t any problems to solve (no *harms*), or that the plan won’t fix the problems (no *solvency*), or that the plan is going to be passed in the status quo (no *inherency*) so there is no inherent need for the affirmative plan; or, more offensively, the negative could argue that the affirmative plan actually makes problems worse (an argument called a *turn*). The negative could also run a *disadvantage*, in which they would argue that the affirmative uniquely (*uniqueness*) sets in motion (the *link*) a chain of events (*internal links*), that ends in catastrophic consequences (the *impact*)—usually some scenario for extinction, that has a shorter *timeframe*, or larger *magnitude*, or is more likely to occur (*probability*) than those in the status quo that the affirmative is claiming to solve. In other words, if the aff is flexin, the neg best flex back even harder.

The negative team might also choose to run a *counterplan*, which contains an alternate way to solve the problems the affirmative team identifies, without causing the *disadvantage* (or multiple *disadvantages*), that the negative team argues are unique to the passage of the affirmative plan.

The negative team could also present a *framework* for the judge to use when evaluating which team, the affirmative or negative, should win the judge's ballot, and consequently, the debate round. The negative could argue that the debate round should be evaluated based on which team does something better than the other (like avoiding extinction), which could mean following certain unwritten, and highly contested, rules and procedures of the game itself that are purported to be necessary for *competitive equity* (also called *fairness*) and/or *education*. One example of this is how the negative could argue that the affirmative plan is *untopical*, or falls outside the preview of the national debate topic, or *resolution*. For the 2012-2013 national debate topic—*Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its investment in transportation infrastructure in the United States*—the negative might argue that investing in two new U.S. Coast Guard vessels that are uniquely designed for cutting through ice because their designated function and use is in the Arctic and Antarctica, not *in the United States.*

Welcome to traditional academic policy debate where not everyone feels welcomed. Similar to the motivations behind scholars advocating for more critical approaches toward literacy education, an increasing number of coaches, debaters, and researchers are pointing to how debate topics, norms and procedures create barriers to the recruitment, retention and academic success of low-income debaters of color, especially African Americans (Hill, 1997; Reid-Brinkley, 2008; Warner, 2006; Wise, 2005). Reid-Brinkley's (2008) research highlighted the norms and unique linguistic and stylistic procedures in policy debate that typically make the activity accessible only to the elite few who can master those set of skills. As mastering these norms and procedures takes a substantial amount of time and training, it is not surprising that scholars note the challenges with recruiting and retaining low-income debaters of color given how mastery privileges those who are trained in the specialized vernacular and procedures at prestigious and extremely expensive summer debate camps hosted at colleges universities and by well-established debate programs that exist almost exclusively at affluent schools with a student body that is certainly not predominately Black or Latin@ given funding disparities stratified along racial and ethnic lines in the United States (Kozol, 2005; Noguera, 2003; Orfield & Eaton, 1996). As such, policy debate discourse has been historically shaped by a non-Black and non-Latin@ privileged few who have established the activity's dominant stylistic norms, procedures, language use, ideology, and performances, some of which are not found in any other activity.

Unlike debates between political candidates, or debates around the dinner table, policy debaters adopt a style of communication that is unique. Traditional policy debate rounds consist of competitors speaking upwards of 500 words a minute in order to squeeze in as many arguments as possible into the allotted time. A critical component in the development of these stylistic procedures occurred after the 1960s when the esteem of eloquence and persuasion of debate became trumped by the introduction of "spreading," or extremely rapid speeches as debaters attempted to take advantage of the time limitations in debate. To veteran college debate coach William Shanahan (2004) these stylistic procedures are "violent forms of domination…brutalizing forms of technique – that is, outrageous levels of speed in concert with impressive word economy, slavish devotion to the…minutiae of flowing where ink passes for argument" (p. 71). Despite its rich history as a spectator sport, with the advent of "spreading" and technical jargon, the number of people who could actually understand debate rounds became limited to those who could actually understand this new style (usually exclusively the judges or those previously trained in this elite discourse). Even fewer could actually compete.

However, around the turn of the 21st century, an alternative "performance" style of debate emerged. Reid-Brinkley's (2008) dissertation provided an ideological analysis of race, performance, and educational discourse in competitive academic policy debate through a case study about one university debate program that ushered in a new style of debating. She documented how Dr. Ede Warner established the Malcolm X Debate Project at the University of Louisville in 2001 in order to both recruit and retain debaters of color and create a method of debating in which his students could wage arguments that would have the debate community confront the salience of race and class privilege. Reid-Brinkley pointed to the significance of an African rhetorical tradition, especially Black protest rhetoric, in Louisville's rhetorical and performative resistance to Whiteness and Eurocentric ideology entrenched in the social, cultural, and procedural norms of traditional debating, the activity's *stylistic procedures,* which includes the performance of identity including “bodily performance, from how we style the body, to how our bodies signify as part of our rhetorical practices” (pp. 68). Reid-Brinkley argued that “the social and cultural stylistic practices of the debate community relevant to the performances of race, gender, class, and sexuality...produce a social and competitive environment hostile to shades of difference” (pp. 66-77). Warner with direction from his assistant coach Daryl Burch, encouraged undergraduate Black college students to debate from their own social location and critique the traditional norms, evidence, stylistic procedures, and cultural practices of traditional debate. As a result, the Louisville debaters began incorporating Hip-Hop music and Black aesthetic styles as a mode of argumentation and style of presentation in their debate tournament debate rounds. This not only functionally doubled the numbers of Black debaters on the team, but Reid-Brinkley argued that using Hip-Hop and Black aesthetic styles in traditional academic policy debate might “combat the ideologies of Whiteness that actively maintain the dominant, normative order of debate” (p. 76).

By using the internet to broadcast their arguments, including demonstration debates, the Louisville Project had a profound effect on Urban Debate Leagues (UDL) and their incorporation of Hip-Hop, Black aesthetics and sociocultural criticism into their debate rounds, beginning in 2003 with Kansas City’s Central High debate who inspired journalist Joe Miller to write a narrative account of the team’s experience in his book *Cross-X*.

When I was the executive director of the Seattle Debate Foundation, I attended a national UDL tournament hosted by Pace Academy in Atlanta, Georgia. I had the opportunity to sit down with Dr. Reid-Brinkley and listen to her research in progress about the Malcolm X Debate Project. After I shared this conversation with the Seattle debaters, the students became energized and really interested in learning more. Both they and I had seen many of their peers leave the activity as quickly as they entered it. Out of an interest in seeking a solution to the challenges with recruiting and retaining non-white debaters, I established the first Hip-Hop debate institute in the country in 2006. It was a two-week residential program at the University of Washington that brought together a team of Hip-Hop artists and debate coaches, including Dr. Shanara Reid-Brinkley; Deverick Murray, a.ka. DevRock, from Towson University, who later went onto establish Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle in Baltimore with several other Towson University debaters; Judy Butler, the co-founder of the Stanford National Debate Institute; beatboxer and emcee, MC RadioActive; Jael Myrick, a.k.a. Wig, UDL graduate, and current Vice Mayor of Richmond, California; and Hip-Hop performing, recording and teaching artists, Toni Hill and Mic Crenshaw; among many others. As Black, Latin@ and Native American high school students began infusing Hip-Hop culture into their debating, not only did the demographics of urban debate in Seattle change from a league that had previously been nearly all White, but a new method was introduced to the Pacific Northwest in which students were leveraging Hip-Hop culture to enrich their compositions and check back monocultural and monolingual discourses. Similar to Louisville's three-tiered methodology,[7] Hip-Hop Debate (as I began calling the style of debating in 2007) provided another way to evaluate truth claims in high school debate by using academic evidence *along with* organic intellectuals (Gramsci, 1971) and personal narratives (debaters).

I continued to experience comparable observations when I moved to New York and read an article featured in *TheGrio.com* about a high school debate team in Brooklyn incorporating Hip-Hop into their debating. Former coach and English teacher at the small Title 1 high school, was quoted in the article saying how debate influenced his students: "'We're dealing with a really educationally underserved population, kids who really struggle with English…But in debate, it's as heavy as it gets. [The students] learn vocabulary, have to be able to defend it in front of a judge and present clear arguments.'" One of the students, Stephon Adams, aka, The E-Lusion, aka DJ Slick, further explained, "'I get this confidence that I didn't have before I debated…My grades are up and college is a bigger part of the picture."' During their junior year E-Lusion and his partner Devonte Escoffery, aka Fatality, aka Fatal, aka Fa-tayl (each different iteration Devonte's names as an artist represents a different period of time in the evolution of him as a Hip-Hop artist), started incorporating their Hip-Hop identities, language, and literacies into debate to speak from their own social location and address economic, social, political, and cultural issues that were relevant to them and their lived experiences. They performed original raps which were grounded in empirical research and critical theory and addressed issues facing their communities in Canarsie and Crown Heights. Fatality expressed the connection between his social location and Hip-Hop: "'In debate, I talk about my social location, Canarsie [Brooklyn]. And rap music influences my view of the world…[E-Lusion and I] believe that one, rap music shouldn't shape you in a bad way or a negative way. Our personal narratives should be heard."' Fatality continued to explain the importance of making his voice heard: '"Not all, but [some of] these politicians don't know what [those living in poverty] go through on a daily basis…But if they hear the voices of those going through it, then they're better able to do something about it."'

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[7] Shout out to Daryl Burch for developing Louisville's "three-tiered methodology"—drawing from academic intellectuals, organic intellectuals, and personal narratives—to evaluate truth claims.

Given my work in Seattle, I had to reach out to these two young men. At the time I was enrolled in a course with George Stoney on socially relevant documentary production. I received permission from the two debaters to follow them during their debate season and create a documentary about their work. In the process, the two scholars and their teacher asked me to volunteer to join their coaching team. I agreed.

During the 2010-2011 debate season, I leveraged public support and organized supplemental training opportunities with renowned college coaches for two Afro-Caribbean American seniors to facilitate their attendance at seven national tournaments including Harvard and Emory University. They made history. They became the first team from Brooklyn and the first team from the New York Urban Debate League to qualify for the TOC. The two young men, now college students, reflected on their debate career during an interview for my documentary, Hip-Hop kept them in debate. E-Lusion explained: “[There were] times when I felt like, look, I’m gonna quit debate because I’m not getting this. I’ll probably never understand this because this is for preppy, White class kids, or rich kids, and me as a black minority kid, cannot probably understand, may not ever understand. But being encouraged to stay in debate, through our imposing of Hip-Hop into debate has really encouraged me and kept me self determined.” Fatality explained that in incorporating Hip-Hop into debate, his feelings and attitudes about debating changed from indifference to a passionate drive to use his skills and knowledge for social change: “At first, my mentality there was ‘whatever debate;’ it wasn’t about a political movement or being an activist at all…[now] I know that from debate we are going to change the world either through our music or any organization we go through…because of our viewpoints and because of debate” (Fatality, cited in Johnson, 2011).

The two Brooklyn graduates are not alone. Other teams from low-income and predominantly Black and Latin@ public schools have been speaking from their own social locations and employing other styles of presentation and ways of knowing including Hip-Hop. There was something about Hip-Hop in debate that mattered. It reflected and respected the students’ passions, cultural affiliations, funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992) and linguistic wealth. In Hip-Hop Debate students were being supported to learn the essential skills of debate—critical thinking, research, reading proficiency, persuasive argument composition, and teamwork—and learn and debate about the complexity of the national debate topic along with other social, critical, and political theories, *without* checking their identities, languages, and cultures at the door. The debaters were encouraged to have discursive fluidity, navigating and building upon the dominant discourse of debate by supplementing it with their own subjectivities and linguistic and cultural wealth. Students could be academic and public intellectuals, artists, and creative knowledge producers, without having to choose one over the other.

To be sure, the incorporation of Hip-Hop into debate does not mean students only debate by rapping or playing music, nor does it mean that students are not taught to navigate dominant discourses and languages; to build a strong case the debaters need to be well-read and have thoroughly researched positions with solid logical arguments—many pre-written—explained in a persuasive manner. However, with the incorporation of Hip-Hop, the debaters go beyond a Greek classical tradition of rhetoric and oratory as they weave together features of African American rhetoric(s) and students' unique ethnic cultural and linguistic practices with the Language of Wider Communication (Smitherman, 1995), Edited American English (EAE), Dominant American English (Paris, 2012; Young, Barrett, Young-Rivera, & Lovejoy, 2015)—or what is often referred to as "standard English."

While in the beginning of the 20th century up until the 1980s, English teachers published articles in English education journals that talked about focusing on or incorporating oral language and debate into the teaching of English, the recent body of research on debate and its pedagogical implications for literacy and English language arts education is under covered and largely reported in brief news articles (Ervin, 2001; Hoover 2003; Morris, 2002;) or explained through quantitative research (Anderson & Mezuk, 2012; Mezuk, 2009; Mezuk, Bondarenko, Smith & Tucker, 2011). While existing quantitative literature demonstrates a statistical correlation between high school students participating in the Chicago UDL and positive academic outcomes: on-time graduation from high school (Anderson & Mezuk, 2012; Mezuk, Bondarenko, Smith & Tucker, 2011); improving grades faster and more than non-debaters each semester in high school, college readiness, and a higher average GPA that is significantly above the benchmark for college readiness (Mezuk, Bondarenko, Smith & Tucker, 2011); and reducing high school drop outs rates among those who are more statistically likely to drop out (Anderson & Mezuk, 2012), without additional qualitative research, we are unable to pin point the reasons behind these outcomes or the relationship between participation in debate and the development of 21st century language and literacy practices. Existing research misses evidence around what can be learned from looking at the language and literacy practices in debate to better understand the role of oral language, new literacies, hybrid languages, and youth cultural production in the development of literacies of access and social justice and the related possibilities to inform literacy and English language arts education. Additionally, there is one other gaping hole in the research as there scant research around a new form of debating that has surfaced over the last ten years in which Black and Brown debaters are incorporating Hip-Hop culture as a form of argumentation and mode of composition and presentation in their debate rounds to challenge what they see as culturally exclusionary stylistic procedures and content of traditional debate that function as participation barriers for Black and Brown students. While rhetorician Reid-Brinkley's (2008) longitudinal ethnography examined Hip-Hop in collegiate debate within the frame of African American protest rhetoric, and Polson (2012) examined performance debate in the Baltimore UDL in terms of supporting student agency, race-consciousness, and challenges to

Whiteness, and journalist Joe Miller wrote a book about his experience working with one Kansas City high school debate team using Hip-Hop in their debate rounds, no research examines the language and literacy practices being developed and leveraged by large numbers of Black and Brown youth incorporating Hip-Hop culture into debate that engage conversations around ways to update English education for the 21st century inside and outside of schools to make room for the discovery of new possibilities for the development of literacies of access and liberation.

In the next chapter I discuss how reproduction theory (Anyon, 1980; Bowles & Gintis, 1970; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Carnoy & Levin, 1985; Gramsci, 1971; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Willis, 1981) African American literacies and rhetorics (Alim & Baugh, 2004; Gilyard, 2004; Jackson & Richardson, 2003, 2004; Paris, 2009; Richardson, 2003; Smitherman, 1977), and sociocultural (Gee, 2012; Graff, 1982; Gutiérrez, 2008; Heath, 1992; Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Street, 1993); and critical theories of language, learning and literacies (Freire, 1970; Lankshear & McLaren, 1993; Luke, 1994; McLaren, 2003; Morrell, 2008) provide a useful conceptual framework for this new research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

To initially conceptualize my project and the larger context surrounding teaching and learning in compulsory schools in the United States, I begin with an examination of social and cultural theories about the reproduction of inequality in education. I start with a brief examination of some predominate social and cultural critiques of education as sites of reproduction to illuminate some of the shortfalls in theorizing about reducing “achievement gaps” and the framing of so-called “under-performing” or “at-risk” students in formal schooling. I then review a broad but focused spectrum of theory and research in African American literacies and rhetoric(s), English language arts, and sociocultural and critical education theories to establish a framework and context for my critical ethnographic study about the various factors mediating students’ learning, identities, literacies and linguistic and rhetorical practices in debate and the subsequent ways in which young people are developing and using new literacies, language and rhetorics to make meaning about texts and to produce and communicate new knowledge about the possibilities of words and the world in competitive academic high school policy debate and in the larger society.

Race, (Re)production, and Resistance

> *If the “at-risk” educators do not acknowledge the colonial legacy that informs their relationship with the oppressive conditions of the “at-risk” reality, they will become at best paternalistic missionaries or, at worst, literacy and poverty pimps who make a living from the human misery with which they are in ideological complicity.* – Donald Macedo (Forward *to Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage,* 1998, pp. xxxi-xxxii)

I begin with the quote by Donald Macedo to call attention to a broader context in which teaching and learning occurs. The reality of entrenched inequality across myriad economic, social, and political indicators coupled with the persistent clamoring of grand narratives of meritocracy and individualism permeating social and civic relations, demands an committed meditation on the dynamics of social, economic, cultural, reproduction of and resistance to inequality in education in the United States.

Socioeconomic and cultural reproduction. Many education reform scholars argue that education initiatives like *No Child Left Behind* and *Race to the Top*, with their focus on high-stakes test-based accountability and choice, fail to address, and in turn, reproduce inequalities in educational outcomes (Noguera, 2012; Ravitch, 2010). Many of these sociologists of education note how poverty is a key factor in this cycle of reproduction. Not only are there needs external to schooling that influence a child's ability to learn, from health to household and neighborhood stability and safety, but also, many low-income schools often have less certified teachers, inadequate facilities, overcrowded classrooms, and higher teacher and principal turnover rates (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Noguera, 2003, 2010; Ravitch, 2010).

Other practices implicated in entrenching educational disparities include student tracking and disciplinary procedures that in addition to their racial bias (Ayers, Dohrn, & Ayers, 2001; Gregory, Skiba & Noguera, 2010), can prevent collective resistance and collaborative learning by dividing students and teachers in a hierarchical competition for rewards (Grace, 1984).

Some critical theorists argue this reproduction is intentional, that compulsory education was developed to serve the needs of a growing capitalist system, and as such, schooling needed to replicate the stratification (and inequality) of the labor force (Anyon, 1980; Bowles & Gintis, 1970; Carnoy & Levin, 1985; Willis, 1981).

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) argued that schools reproduce inequality by privileging *dominant-class cultural norms*. If academic success is predicated on the degree to which a student demonstrates mastery of dominant-class discourses, students born into the dominant class are at an inherent advantage. This tacit privileging of one class' norms, beliefs, values, ideology, language, (his)tories and knowledge production over all others, discounting the validity of non-dominant cultures, normalizes and masks the ways in which formal schooling reproduces inequalities.

Gramsci (1971) articulates this dominant-class cultural supremacy in terms of cultural hegemony: the ability to get the oppressed, or subaltern class, to willingly accept their oppression. In this sense, education is not about students becoming better critical thinkers, innovators, and creative cultural and knowledge producers, but about students becoming schooled in ways that solidifies their uncritical acceptance of and allegiance to dominant European culture, norms, behaviors, procedures, ideologies, and versions of history; those who are able to demonstrate that they belong to the dominant-class culture are best positioned for academic and subsequent future success in employment and for accessing and wielding social, economic, and political power. Over the course of their schooling, students internalize dominant class cultural norms and procedures to such an extent that as they enter their later years of schooling, the students become self-governing, self-policing agents of the hegemonic order in which they self-impose normalized regulations on their behavior and attitudes. At this point, seeing the lack of external regulation as an award of freedom, a badge of honor that they have earned, affirms the students' capabilities to govern others; these privileged few who advance through the ranks to become the new experts, bureaucrats, administrators, lobbyists, politicians, and teachers in turn reproduce the dominant-class culture and ideologies and subtly enforce them upon non-dominant classes, erasing non-dominant cultures, languages and ways of knowing. Through the dominant classes' ability to win the get the subaltern class' passive or active acquiescence to being disciplined to receive, obey, assimilate and become productive working-class subjects under the guidance and supervision of the specialized elites (p. 53). Although Gramsci acknowledged that non-dominant classes might at times resist their subordination, he argued that this resistance is usually interrupted by those in power. When critical pedagogue Paulo Freire (2003) said, “Within the structures of domination [schools] function largely as agencies which prepare the invaders of the future” (p. 154), by Gramsci’s theory, these invaders would function to limit the resistance to subordination. However, as I will outline later, Freire and other critical education theorists depart from reproduction theory when they illuminate the significance of human agency and alternative ways to conceive of literacy, learning, and education.

More recently, public school systems have been critiqued for their lack of culturally relevant curricula and pedagogical practices (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Others have documented how resistance to bicultural education and prohibitions on bilingual education massively constrain educational outcomes for students of color and bicultural students whose languages, histories, and cultures are not reflected in their educational settings (Darder, 2012; Valdés, 2005).

At this point, I must pause and acknowledge the slippery nature of the term “culture”. Stuart Hall (2006) and Raymond Williams (1977) interrogated the notion of a coherent static cultural identity. If identities are a production, always developing and being constituted within representations, what *really* is *cultural identity*? To Hall this could mean two things. The first meaning assumes we all have a shared cultural identity in the sense of a shared ancestry or historical roots that exist outside of our unique temporal, historical, political and sociocultural moments. However, we are still in the process of becoming; our identities are not reducible to, or can be adequately captured by a singular and static portrait that purports to reflect a singular experience or identity because we are all continuously shaped by our experiences, and unique sociocultural and historical contexts. Whenever I use "culture," I use it with the acknowledgement that culture is dynamic. However, to disregard culture entirely because of its evolving nature would be to miss the salience of shared practices, values, beliefs, languages, artifacts, and ways of knowing.

Similarly, I acknowledge that race is not a fixed and concrete truth that can be objectively determined; rather it is a construction of dynamic processes of conflict and accommodation. As such, I align myself with Omi and Winant (1994) who argue that any critical inquiry around race requires an examination of myriad state and individual *racial projects* that are inexorably linked with formal and informal structures, institutions, and cultural formations, practices, and artifacts, which have and continue to be shaped by a number of social, cultural, economic, and political factors. Examining the *racial projects* that have facilitated configurations of domination and oppression highlights how independent of class, racial inequality has a unique history of production, reproduction, and resistance at both macro and micro levels in the United States. As Cornel West (1993) said: Race Matters.

The racial processes at work over the past 400 years in the United States have been products of violent coercion and domination as well as subtler forms of power exercised by anti-Blackness and White supremacist racial and cultural hegemony during the latter part of the 20th century. And although the production and reproduction of economic inequality plays a significant role in the history of the United States, indentured servitude, slavery, sharecropping, legal segregation, and de facto segregation, speak to a history fraught with unique inequalities along racial lines, which have established deep roots in American institutions, socio-political structures, and micro-level cultural interactions. Despite the many ways that all ethnic groups have experienced oppression in the creation of American civil society, the positionality of Black people in the United States is unique (Gordon, 1995; Wilderson, 2007). For instance, Whites were also indentured servants in colonial America but understanding how the institution of slavery was racialized and sustained is particularly important considering its necessary supporting relationship to the establishment and maintenance of racial hierarchies and oppression from Jim Crow to the status quo. Merely noting when the enslavement of Africans became codified in law falls short in explaining the political and economic motivations that have *divide and conquer* and anti-Blackness as a strategic centerpiece. Even the poorest Whites throughout history, as well as many indigenous Americans who distanced themselves from Black people (see Gross, 2008), could take solace in knowing they were not on the bottom of the social hierarchy; they could still see themselves as “better than” and more privileged than Blacks, which assisted in the maintenance of a particular political and economic order (Gross, 2008). On the flip side, the alternative configuration, as Cornell West (1990) suggests, the unity between and within oppressed populations (as well as with their more privileged allies), holds the promise of a stronger, more accountable, and equitable democracy based on respect for a common humanity.

Despite the reality of the historical construction of racial hierarchies, the dynamic process of racial classification, representation, and race-based social, cultural, and political projects speaks to the power of people in defining, challenging and sustaining these notions. For example, despite the period during which biological explanations weighed in heavily on the narratives of racial difference, there is also the reality of the mutability of these “scientific” markers, as is evidenced by the racial trials throughout United States history wherein testimonies by neighbors, lovers, and community members often superseded the testimonies of scientific witnesses (Gross, 2008). Even so, the institutional power to define race is extremely significant. Not unlike the trends in other racial trials in the United States, Susie Gillory Phipps’ legal case suggests that once race is institutionally defined, reversing that determination is difficult, which also reveals the tremendous power of both the historical construction of racial categories and the state's involvement in making those determinations.

However, an examination of racial discourse and rhetoric around Hip-Hop (Rose, 2008), as well as our current presidency (Alim & Smitherman, 2012), not only speaks to the fluidity of race, but also how society, culture, and racial politics in the late 20th and early 21st centuries have given rise to additional blurring and contestation of racial categories. This is not to say that we live in a post-racial America; pointing to instances of racial blurring risks obfuscating the salience of racial categories with respect to language rights, power, opportunity, and oppression.

At the same time, in the midst of these social and cultural forces of oppression, there is resistance. There are examples of students, artists, leaders, and educators embracing new literacies and diverse literate, rhetorical and linguistic traditions that challenge dominant norms and narratives and speak truth to power. Sociocultural and critical education theories, as well as African American literacies dispute the framing of "achievement gaps" and inequalities in terms of cultural or linguistic deficits, and instead, recognize those conditions and perceptions as opportunity gaps (Carter & Weiner, 2013) and limiting situations (Freire 1970/2003) that can and are being changed by updated conceptualizations of "literacy" and English education for the 21st century (Brass & Webb, 2014; Morrell, Dueñas, Gracia, & López, 2013; Morrell & Scherff, 2015).

Perhaps if the histories and literacies that we come to know, teach, and learn change to substantively include—not by mere tokenism or cultural tourism—the narratives, voices, and intellectual and cultural projects of the oppressed along with a more texturized history of the social and political construction of race, we can cast off rose tinted lenses and see that the playing field in the United States is not level and therefore the rules of the game must continue to be changed such that they can ensure a relentless social and political commitment to dismantling the ideological, sociocultural, economic, and political barriers to racial and social justice and make way for the creation of a truly participatory, equitable, just, and radical democracy.

Remixing Englishes and (Re)presenting Possibilities: African American Literacies, Rhetoric(s), and English Language Arts

> *Language is the foundation stone of education and the medium of instruction in all subjects and disciplines throughout schooling. It is critical that teachers have an understanding of an appreciation for the language students bring to school.*
>
> - Geneva Smitherman (2000, p. 119).

> *It is important that people understand the roles and power that the griot has been endowed with since the beginning. One of the roles that the griot in African society had before the Europeans came was maintaining a cultural and historical past with that of the present.*
>
> - D'Jimo Kouyate, "The Role of the Griot"

> *…at the dawn of the new millennium, there is still a great need for understanding how inextricably interwoven the human family actually is. All we can state with confidence is this: all roads lead us back to Africa.*
>
> - Mark Christian, *Multicultural Identity* (2000, p. 123)

As English educators in the 21st century, with increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms and a continual growth in new technologies available for making meaning, we must reflexively question what we presume "counts" as English, literacy, and literacy education, which includes not assuming its cultural and political neutrality (Graff, 1982/1988; Street, 1993). An examination of African American language, literacies, and rhetoric(s) provides three frames to illumine ways to examine and rethink some of these assumptions. As volumes have been written on these areas, this review is by no means exhaustive; I attempt to use broad strokes and thoughtfully focus on a few key works upon which to locate the significance of these fields for my research.

African American language and pluralizing English. In *Talkin Black Talk* A. Samy Alim and John Baugh presented a collection of essays that outlined a vision for equality in education that included rethinking teacher preparation in language and literacy, developing new language pedagogies, and systemically reforming language education policies. Alim and Baugh argued that equal language rights are essential for actualizing the promise of *Brown v Board of Education*. They highlighted a historical blind spot in understanding Black experiences in the United States: "the linguistic legacy of slavery and the related educational legacy of the African slave trade" (p. 2) which is a uniquely different experience from that of all other immigrant groups. A full understanding of this legacy is essential to understand the present conditions and challenges in literacy education that stand as barriers in creating equal educational opportunities:

> ...just as economic institutions are gentrifying and removing Black communities around the nation and offering unfulfilled promises of economic independence, one can also say that educational institutions have been attempting (since integration) to gentrify and remove Black Language (BL) from its speakers with similarly unfulfilled promises of economic mobility. In both cases the message is, 'Economic opportunities will be opened up to you if you just let us clean up your neighborhoods and your language.' Most blacks in the US since integration can testify that they have experienced teachers' attempts to eradicate their language and linguistic practices" (Alim, 2007b, p. 162).

While the experiences of Black people living in America are extremely diverse, the languages of Black slave descendants have two common features. First they are hybrid languages forged out of a contact between European languages and African languages (Baugh, 1999; Smitherman, 1977). Second, they have consistently been downgraded and considered less than their European counterparts (Alim, 2005; Alim & Baugh, 2004), with devastating consequences for children whose intellect has been deemed deficient as a result. Geneva Smitherman (1977) provides a useful definition for African American Language, or Black English as:

> an Africanized form of English reflecting Black America's linguistic-cultural African heritage and the conditions of servitude, oppression and life in America. Black Language is Euro-American speech with an Afro-American meaning, nuance, tone, and gesture. The Black Idiom is used by 80 to 90 percent of American Blacks, at least some of the

> time. It has allowed Blacks to create a culture of survival in an alien land, and as a by-product has served to enrich the language of all Americans. (pp. 2-3)

Yet Black language (BL), Black English (BE), African American language (AAL), or African American English (AAE), is not widely seen by educators as a mechanism to create a "culture of survival" or a mode of enriching "the language of all Americans." In 2000, Smitherman published findings from a 20-year study examining the essay writing of Black 17-year olds. Using data from 1969, 1979, and 1988 through 1999, the research analyzed 2,764 essays scored by National Assessment of Educational Progress-trained evaluators. The scores were based on the essays' alignment with specific writing tasks and overall writing competency. Smitherman found that the features of African American language were fairly infrequent in the essays, and the frequency declined from 1984 to 1988. On specific writing tasks, the use of AAL appeared less frequent when writers were more familiar with the essay form. However, the more that features of AAL appeared in an essay, the lower the essay was scored. The negative correlation between use of AAL and essay scores reflect an inherent bias against Black English. Smitherman later writes in 2000: "Negative language attitudes are directed toward the 'Blackness' of Black English: The attitudes and the language itself are the consequences of the historical operations of racism in the United States" (p. 143). She is not alone in her critique (Baugh, 1999; Gilyard, 1999).

Alim and Baugh (2004) argued that by precluding students from using their home languages in school, "English Only" policies "are actually stripping America's linguistically diverse students of opportunities to participate in the global economy, where diverse linguistic and cultural resources are seen as assets, not handicaps" (p. 11). Instead of privileging one English variety or dialect, like the Language of Wider Communication (LWC)/"standard

English"/Edited American English (EAE)/Dominant American English (DAE), equating lack of its mastery as a marker of deficiency or culturally depravity, educators can respect the language of students' nurture and draw upon the unique features of that language to make those features explicit. In the process of explicating linguistic features of students' home languages, educators can also draw links between the features of other English varieties and the content goals of English language arts including composition, rhetoric, and literary interpretation.

However, what are the boundaries of those content goals? What does learning those goals look like? And respectively, how is this learning assessed? In terms of writing, one perspective is that students must demonstrate mastery over the surface features of the written language. Yet in a high-stakes testing environment, demonstrating this type of mastery would most likely entail some sort of standardized assessment of the written form and the corresponding hierarchical classification of writers in terms of their abilities. The history of the teaching of English is seeped with critiques of these types of assessments and classifications.

Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Johns, and Lowell Schoer (1963) critiqued writing assessment/studies by indicting their methodological soundness and related assumptions that grammar improves writing. Bartholomae (1985) equated the deficit framing of "basic writers" with institutional exclusion. Instead of focusing on language varieties as deficient we should perceive our students as learning new discourses. Typically, a basic writer "has to invent the University by assembling and mimicking its language while finding some compromise between idiosyncrasy, a personal history, on the one hand, and the requirements or convention, the history of a discipline, on the other. He (*sic)* must learn to speak our language. Or he must dare to speak it or carry off the bluff, since speaking and writing will most certainly be required long before this skill is ‘learned,’ and understandably, this causes problems” (p. 135). What is the long-term damage of trying to “carry off the bluff” or in assuming that there is a bluff to carry off?

The process writing movement argued that a writer’s preoccupation with a standard form may be a major impediment to igniting and/or sustaining the writing process (Elbow, 1973; 1981/1998; Murray, 2009). Janet Emig (1971) indicted survey-based methods of assessment of 12th graders’ written compositions because those assessments assume there is a universally agreed upon “correct” mode of composition. What this means is that educators should consider student writing as text and evaluate that text in its own right; students should determine the subject of their writing; students should be free to use their own language; and students should write as many drafts as needed, with each draft considered to be a new paper because, as Donald Murray (1972) argued, as English teachers and teachers of writing, we are teaching a process, not a product. We are teaching a “process of discovery through language,” a process of making meaning about the world, and exploring, evaluating, critiquing, and communicating new knowledge and our feelings, questions, and critiques around that knowledge and the world around us. Educators are coaches and facilitators of learning environments in which students can explore and experience the writing process on their own terms, through their own potential truths and voices (pp. 3-4). Supporting students’ flexibility with form is part of practicing the writing process which is key for future adaptable use because “all writing is experimental” (p. 5): there are no rules or absolutes, just many options and alternatives from which to choose the ones best suited for any given occasion and context.

The Conference on College Composition and Communication (1974) argued that we need alternative ways to assess student academic performance ranging from written to “oral performance-in-situation” (p. 17) that enable students to demonstrate their knowledge of the most effective use of language to communicate as a speaker or writer in different situations; for if the "essential functions of writing as expressing oneself, communicating information and attitudes, and discovering meaning through both logic and metaphor, then we view variety of dialects as an advantage" (p. 11). The emphasis here is on meaningful communication, expression and making meaning through writing. To speak a language is to speak a culture, and to speak a history. To strip down a language not only limits the speaker's ability to express oneself fully, but it violently rips apart who a person is. As Gloria Anzuldúa (1987) poignantly wrote: "So, if you really want to hurt me, talk badly about my language…I am my language" (p. 59).

Do students' English varieties obscure meaning? Or does imposing one variety limit possibilities for meaning-making and powerful communication? In 1974, the Conference on College Composition and Communication approved a resolution on the *Students' Right to their own Language* (SRTOL)*,* which affirmed that students have the right to write and speak in the "dialects of their nurture" because "There is no evidence, in fact, that enables us to describe any language or any dialect as incomplete or deficient apart from the conditions of its use" (p. 12). When standards appeal "to what is labeled 'proper,' they encourage an elitist attitude. The main values they transmit are stasis, restriction, manners, status, and imitation" (p. 14). Furthermore, they argued that LWC "incorporates social, cultural and racial biases which cannot hold for all students" (CCC, 1974, p. 16).

Included in the CCCC resolution were several recommendations for educators to understand that language is at first an oral process and language varieties are shaped by geographical, historical, cultural contexts; language is empirically dynamic with evolving vocabulary, syntax and pronunciation. Language variation or difference should not be equated as deficient, which incites hierarchies of superiority/inferiority, rather, dialectical variations can enrich a lexicon. Given the vast range of English varieties in classrooms, teachers should experience immersion and experience with multiple varieties. Toward this end would be developing an awareness of how morphology of tenses, plurality and other aspects of grammar do not inhibit conveying meaning and shouldn't be reduced to a mistake if the grammar merely fails to capture the dominant English variety and that syntax and non-dominant arrangement of words shouldn't be presumed as inherently interfering with communication. Additionally, word definitions are arbitrary and the dictionary should be a reference, not an excuse to adopt pejorative labels such as 'broken English.' Lastly, it is important to teach students how to recognize and navigate dominant discourses and the attendant social biases that may be inherent in certain professional and social institutions; "But it is one thing to help a student achieve proficiency in a written dialect and another thing to punish him *(sic)* for using variant expressions of that dialect" (CCCC, p. 23) for "humanity tells us that we should allow every man *(sic)* the dignity of his own way of talking" (p. 22).

Arguing that valuing students' languages and social locations is in the interest of making schools more just, some like Lisa Delpit (2002) might err on the side of teaching students how to code-switch, being able to move from one language to another depending on the situation, such as using one language variety in school and another at home. Others, like Vershawn Young (2014), argue that this situational code-switching is a racialized technique that entrenches linguistic segregation in classrooms and in the larger society; students should not have to resign themselves to a uniform language variety depending on the situation, but should be freed to develop mastery over linguistic and discursive hybridity and intertexuality (Anzaldúa, 1999; Darder, 2012; Young, Barrett, Young-Rivera & Lovejoy, 2014). For when we demand that students use only one linguistic register, we risk pushing students to adopt artificial textual voices (Bartholomae, 1985), set the stage for causing psychological harm (Smitherman & Alim, 2012), and we foreclose on opportunities for our students' discovery of their own academic and public voices and the development of justified confidence in their own voices, cultures, and ways of knowing (Smitherman, 1986; Gilyard, 1988).

Additionally, one can observe how times are changing to some degree as indicated by the number of Black English speakers with lucrative careers in politics, news, entertainment, and sports (Young, 2014; Alim & Smitherman, 2012). Smitherman and Alim (2012) go so far as to say that President Barak Obama's ability to embrace both Black English and EAE was a prominent factor in his election over Mitt Romney.

Furthermore, in 21st century classrooms Black English crosses ethnic lines. One example of this language crossing is documented in Django Paris' (2009) yearlong ethnographic study in a multiethnic urban high school with a student body that was 17 percent Black, 10 percent Pacific Islander, and 73 percent Latin@. From analyzing ethnolinguistic interviews and field notes with eight core student participants and sixty of their peers, Paris noted the youths' linguistic dexterity and language sharing practices: that while Pacific Islander and Latin@ students maintained identities and languages within their respective ethnic communities, they were also creating identities within a broader multiethnic youth culture in which features of Black English are prominent.

What does this mean for literacy educators? Alim (2005) outlined several sociolinguistic approaches that have emerged. William Labov's research indicated that teachers should be more *linguistically informed* to be aware of the differences between mistakes in reading and differences in pronunciation, which is similar to CCCC's recommendations. John Rickford argued for a *contrastive analytical* approach to enable students to see the differences between "standard English" and Black English, in order for students to gradually shed the features of Black English in their writing. Simpkins and Simpkins' (1981) research found that when teachers introduced reading in the home language of the student and supported *dialect readers*, and then used that as a bridge to switch to Dominant American English, that Black students showed a 6.2 months reading gain in a 4-month period versus the control group that showed a marginal decrease in reading skills. Others, like Walt Wolfram at North Carolina State University, have introduced *dialect awareness programs*, which infuse linguistic variation into school curricula, which also meets International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) standards around increasing student "'understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions and social roles"' (NCTE & IRA, p. 3, cited in Alim, pg. 27). Shirley Bryce Heath posited a *mismatch theory*, highlighting the "different not deficient" language and literacy practices of the home and school, which led educators to develop ways to bridge these out-of-school language and literacy practices with those in schools. New Literacy Studies (NLS) draw upon social and cultural theories in advocating *socially-situated literacies,* to embrace literacies that are constitutive of daily life. Ultimately, Alim (2005) calls for an integration of sociolinguistic theory with educational policy and practice through critical language awareness (CLA) programs in the United States.

Responding to the move for 'language awareness' programs in schools in the 1980s, critical language awareness inserts a criticality into the theorizing and implementation of language awareness programs coupled with a theory of language and learning that draws upon students' prior knowledge and develops their skills for practicing language, including creative and innovative practice (Fairclough, 2010). Fairclough (2010) argued that power is exercised by gaining consent, entrenching ideology, and securing social control, and language generates this consent, spreads ideology, and inculcates self-disciplining practices. He argued that we live in an age in which cultural practices and processes produce and reproduce the social order, and that in this context there is "an enhanced role for language in the exercise of power: it is mainly in discourse that consent is achieved, ideologies are transmitted, and practices, meanings, values and identities are taught and learnt" (p. 531). As power is mediated by language and education is a critical site for mediating other sociocultural and political domains like work and civic life, CLA is positioned as an indispensable resource for reshaping discourses and their attendant power relations. Understanding the conventions and practices of academic discourse and the struggles and possibilities for learners to transform those practices requires a reflexive analysis of power relations. As such, Fairclough (1992) argued that CLA is essential for salient democratic citizenship, especially for fostering certain habits of mind and skills in children in educational arenas. He further explained how as the world changes, CLA is an increasingly important resource for people facing new experiences living in a globalized, information and digitally rich 21st century society, including the need to be critically aware of multimodal discourses that have other forms of semiotics to decode and encode in addition to language.

CLA entails embracing a pedagogy that enables both students and teachers to understand the sociolinguistic power dynamics at work in the stigmatization of language varieties, as well as the ways in which these forces can be changed in the service of those who have been linguistically marginalized. By highlighting one critical language awareness program, the Linguistic Profiling Project at Stanford University, Alim (2005) argued that educators can embrace a pedagogy that enables teachers and students to interrogate how language can be used "to maintain, reinforce, and perpetuate existing power relations" as well as how "language can be used to resist, redefine and possibly reverse these relations" (p. 28). In the teaching of language, Alim's position is that "our goal should be *arming* [students] with the silent weapons needed for the quiet, discursive wars that are waged daily against their language and person" (p. 29).

African American literacies. Alim's position suggests that teaching language must have at its heart a radical orientation for a more just and equitable world. To be sure, this orientation is not new. Literacy for freedom has been at the heart of an African American literate tradition. From French colonialists, to Western slaveholders, American slaves were prohibited from learning and teaching letters because literacy could provide slaves with the tools to become critically aware of their oppressive conditions and work toward individual and collective emancipation. From Frederick Douglass' slave narrative on the horrors of slavery, to the myriad orations and pamphlets calling for slavery's abolition, to Septima Clark's role in developing Citizenship Schools and stimulating voter registration organizing in the South, literacy was the practice of freedom. Perry (2003) chronicled how African Americans employed critical language and literacies for citizenship, leadership, racial uplift, and personal and collective liberation. Literacy provided a language of critique to expose the colonization of psyches and space, to reclaim one's identity and to generate the strength to fight for justice. She who controls the letters, controls much more than the letters. Passed down through oral and written narratives, an African American philosophy of education and literacy is inexorably woven into the identity of African Americans as free.

Even in the face of threats to one's life, the drive for literacy prevailed, as the threats signified the power of literacy. Douglass (1845/2010) recounted the illuminating warrants behind the slave owner, Mr. Auld, forbidding Mrs. Auld from teaching Douglass how to read: "It would forever unfit him to be a slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no value to his master" (p. 142). Douglass explained that "From that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom...I set out with high hope and a fixed purpose, at whatever cost of trouble to learn how to read" (p. 143). And it was learning to write that enabled Douglass to write a passage to escape slavery and become a leader in the antislavery movement. Perry (2003) wrote, "For the slaves, literacy was more than a symbol of freedom; it *was* freedom. It affirmed their humanity, their personhood. To be able to read and write was an intrinsic good, as well as a mighty weapon in the slave's struggle for freedom" (p. 13).

Developing literacy was not only an individual achievement but communal—each one teach one—because literacy was for individual and collective freedom. Literacy meant being able to read and write about the antislavery movement. Literacy meant being able to lead slave rebellions and write to expose the horros and inhumanity of the system of slavery. Literacy meant being able to read the Bible's messages in support of resistance and rebellion. And, Malcolm X demonstrated the importance of literacy as being able to write oneself into history, to assert one's humanity, to resist and to lead in the struggle for individual and collective emancipation.

Furthermore, Malcolm X challenged assumptions about where literacy education occurs: "A school is not four walls and a roof. It is whenever you get one person willing to teach and one who's willing to learn;" and sometimes one is the teacher other times the student (Yuri quoting X, cited in Perry, p. 24). Similarly, Septima Clark recalls the Citizenship Schools: "In 1964 there were 195 going at one time. They were in people's kitchens, in beauty parlors, and under trees in the summer time" (cited in Perry, p. 43). This literacy education without walls is what Clark says established the foundation upon which the Civil Rights Movement was built. Literacy development was subversive, at times hidden from the public (White) gaze, but literacy was essential because it was a prerequisite for voter registration organizing and for opening up space for Black civic participation.

Educators continue to build upon the rich African American literate tradition. Connecting African American literacies of freedom and survival throughout history with the development of academic literacy is an especially powerful act within the context of an educational system that produces, reproduces, and challenges knowledge production and social inequalities. In *African American Literacies,* Elaine Richardson (2003) reported on her findings from a multi-methodological investigation about the role of an African American-centered composition curriculum. Her research examined the writings of 52 students in a basic writing course that she taught at a Big Ten university. Through an African American-centered composition curriculum, Richardson's students analyzed language, literacy, rhetorical practices and worldviews found in the African American tradition from slave narratives to Hip-Hop and the "vernacular resistance arts and cultural productions that are created to carve out free spaces in oppressive locations such as the classroom, the streets, or the airwaves to name a few" (Richardson, 2003, p. 16).

Teaching reading, writing, language, and literacies demands unwavering attention to the broader historical context of writing and reading in a racialized society. Paying attention to our textual choices for classroom materials matters. Having courageous and thoughtful conversations around the larger sociocultural, political and racial context of textual production and dissemination matters. Toni Morrison (1993) elaborates in *Playing in the dark: Whiteness and the literary imagination* that this attention cannot just be a side dish in our teaching of literature and American studies because American literature is profoundly shaped and informed by a 400-year-old history of Africans and African Americans in the United States:

> There seems to be a question or more tacit agreement among literary scholars that, because American literature has been clearly the preserve of White male views, genius, and power, those views, genius, and power are without relationship to and removed from the overwhelming presence of Black people in the US. This agreement is made about a population that preceded every American writer of renown and was, I have come to believe, one of the most furtively radical impinging forces on the country's literature. The contemplation of this black presence is central to any understanding of our national literature and should not be permitted to hover at the margins of the literary imagination" (pp. 4-5).

Teaching and learning in this racialized context requires sustained work. This work necessitates a critical examination of the texts, literacies, languages, and rhetorics that are presumed as ideologically and racially neutral and those that are overshadowed or pejoratively labeled as deficient, divisive, or culturally depraved. As educators we must interrogate our assumptions about what literacies we think should be teaching and privileging, and what materials and schools of thoughts we are using in English language arts classrooms or in out-of-school spaces like competitive academic policy debate.

Pluralizing rhetoric: Greek and African American rhetoric(s). The empowerment of voice is essential for groups and individuals to utilize the many platforms for producing and distributing knowledge in academic and civic spaces. To tap into the power of the word is to draw upon a Western rhetorical tradition, from Socrates to Plato, and from Aristotle to Cicero, as well as a rich African rhetorical tradition of orature that preceded the development of ancient Greek civilization.

An examination of a Greek rhetorical tradition may start with Socrates and Plato, then linger on Aristotle because of his prominence in the teaching of rhetoric in secondary and higher education. An Aristotelian rhetoric includes the classic three pillars of argument construction privileged in the study of rhetoric: ethos, pathos, and logos: establishing credibility, having an emotive appeal, and warranting arguments with logic. The goal of Aristotelian rhetoric is having the power of persuasion on any topic for one of three purposes: deliberative or political, epideictic or ceremonial, and forensic or legal (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990). Building upon Aristotelian rhetoric, Cicero laid out five additional features of speech composition: heuristic invention of arguments, argument arrangement, selecting the best words for style, speech memorization, and speech delivery (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990).

Yet rhetoric in the African tradition predated the Greeks (Asante, 2003; James, 2014; Karenga, 2003; Richarson & Jackson, 2003) and provides for a more expansive understanding of rhetoric. To engage in African American rhetorics (AAR) is to enter into ancient and ongoing tradition of communicative practice, a practice that reaffirms not only the creative power of the word but also rootedness in a history, community and culture, which provides the foundation and framework for "self-understanding and self-assertion in the world" (Karenga, 2003, p. 5). It is reflected in the orations of preachers, the storytelling and oral history preservation of griots, the cultural and political expressions of poets, the calls to action of political activists, and the digital rhetoric of DJs (Banks, 2011). The griot, for example, demonstrates the multidimensionality of African American rhetors, as the griot is central to the life of her or his community in myriad ways: The griot is a master of words, music, and stories, preserving history and its connections to the present and future possibilities, building community and forging pathways of survival in the face of physical, spiritual and psychological threats (Kouyate, 1989; Banks, 2011).

Guided by Kawaida philosophy and drawing from ancient African texts as a major factor in differentiating African rhetoric from dominant European rhetorical paradigms, Maulana Karenga (2003) outlined an African-centered framework for understanding African American rhetoric as a "rhetoric of *communal* deliberation, discourse, and action, oriented toward that which is good for the *community* and world...*communicative* practice is posed as both expressive and constitutive of community, a process and practice of building *community* and bringing good into the world [emphasis added]" (p. 3). He framed African rhetoric within four socioethical concerns: "the dignity and rights of the human person, the well-being and flourishing of family and community, the integrity and value of the environment, and the reciprocal solidarity and cooperation for mutual benefit of humanity" (p. 4). These socioethical concerns are rooted in Kawaida philosophy which recursively synthesizes "the best of African thought and practice in constant exchange with the world and is directed toward the enduring historical project of maximum human freedom and human flourishing times" (p. 4). This requires a continual dialogue with African descendants and culture to recognize what Africa and the African diaspora contributes to knowledge and praxis in the interest of improving life for all of humanity and future generations. This dialogue with African culture means "to constantly engage its texts, continental and diasporan, ancient and modern. This will include engaging its oral, written, and living-practice texts, its paradigms, its worldview and values, and its understanding of itself and the world in an ongoing search for ever better answers to the fundamental enduring, and current questions and challenges of our lives" (pp. 4-5).

Given the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade and the corresponding manifestations and maintenance of racial oppression and resistance in the United States, common themes in an African American rhetorical tradition are resistance, reaffirmation, and possibility (Karenga, 2003). Molefi Kete Asante (2003) argued that rhetors from the African Diaspora hold the hope for quests for freedom in North America: "For the African American rhetorical theorist, there can be no genuine 'African' approach to rhetoric without some attention to the cultural issues that confront us as descendant or native Africans. If this is an essentialist rendering, then I am prepared to say that the future of African American rhetoric is an essentialist undertaking so long as the commonality of our experience necessitates the reaffirmation of the uniqueness of our quest for liberation from mental, cultural, intellectual, and economic oppression. It is only in this way that we remain the vanguard of freedom in the North American context" (p. 290).

To this end, Asante (2003) has argued that the best African American rhetors of the 21st century "will be those who imbue their speeches, essays, and discourses with correctives, reconciliation, and challenges to White Supremacy" (pp. 286-287). Discourses of correctives organize around reparations for slavery and educating the public (debaters' cases, notwithstanding, see Ta-Nehisi Coates' 2014 article in *The Atlantic* as an example). Discourses of reconciliation create the ethical platform necessary to establish a rhetor's credibility in launching substantive challenges to the doctrine of White Supremacy. Further, Asante (2003) predicted that "the best rhetors will demonstrate reliance on the following emerging African American cultural themes: spirituality, musicality/rhythm, emotional vitality, resilience, humanism, communalism, orality and verbal expressiveness, realness, and soul style" (p. 288).

Relatedly, one developing area in the field of AAR and AAL is the examination of the everyday literacy and rhetorical practices of young people in the Hip-Hop generation. To be sure, Hip-Hop is by no means an exclusively Black cultural practice. However, to have a more textured understanding of African American literacies, language, and rhetorical practices in the 21st century requires extending the conversation to Hip-Hop culture.

Hip-Hop language and literacies.

> *Hip-hop is the voice of this generation. Even if you didn't grow up in the Bronx in the '70s, hip-hop is there for you. It has become a powerful force. Hip-hop binds all of these people, all of these nationalities, all of the world together.* – DJ Kool Herc

Hip-Hop culture emerged like a phoenix out of the ashes of the Bronx in the 1970s. In the decade prior, Robert Moses' Cross-Bronx Expressway had carved through the heart of the South Bronx forcing thousands of residents from their homes and displacing local businesses. Property values plummeted. In the wake of middle-class White-flight, tenements, multi-story and multifamily apartments lay abandoned or were turned into federally funded single room occupancy dwellings, the conditions of which were neglected at the hands of absentee slumlords. As the Bronx was redlined by banks and insurance companies and landlords failed to have the capital to pay mortgages and property taxes, they turned to insurance fraud: block after block, landlords began burning down their buildings to the ground. At least 40% of housing in the South Bronx was destroyed in the 1970s (in his book *The Fires,* journalist Joe Flood reports a 97% loss in seven Bronx census tracts). By the mid-1970s, per capita income in the South Bronx was at $2,430 and youth unemployment soared to 60% (Jeff Chang (2005) notes how youth advocates say this unemployment rate was closer to 80%). Crime and street gangs were at an all-time high. Against the backdrop of deindustrialization, a national recession, 'benign neglect', COINTELPRO, and the decline of the Keynesian State, the borough was hemorrhaging residents, homes, jobs and lives. Out of these conditions Hip-Hop culture was born. Legal scholar Akilah Folami (2007) explains: "Hip-hop arose out of the ruins of a post-industrial and ravaged South Bronx, as a form of expression of urban Black and Latino youth, who politicians and the dominant public and political discourse had written off, and, for all intent and purposes, abandoned" (p. 240). Cornel West (1999) explained that Hip-Hop "is part and parcel of the subversive energies of black underclass youth, energies that are forced to take a cultural mode of articulation because of the political lethargy of American society (p. 288). And the creative genius of Black and Latin@ youth behind this "cultural mode of articulation" provided life support for hope.

With Jamaican born DJ Kool Herc's *emceeing/MCing* (syncopated, rhymed spoken "toasts" or speech, aka, "rap") over his mixing of reggae, jazz, funk, gospel and country records on two turntables (*deejaying/DJing*), who together with Afrika Bambaataa and Grand Master

Flash elongated a song’s break for break-dancers (*breakdancing* done by *B-girls* and *B-boys*) whose moves reflected dances from the African Diaspora, and visual artists utilizing aerosol paint to create public art (*graffiti*) that resembled hieroglyphs from ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, four elements combined with what The Godfather of Hip-Hop, Afrika Bambaataa, calls the fifth element—knowledge of self and community—to give form to Hip-Hop culture.

As digital media, the Internet and globalization have dramatically increased the ability for people around the globe to connect instantaneously, this globalizing reality directly implicates the rhetorical, political, and cultural power of Hip-Hop as an oppositional and unifying language that has no bounds, as argued by sociologist Michael Eric Dyson (2007). Referring to West Coast gangsta rapper, Ice Cube, as the “iconographic interrogator of state policies of repression,” and Polish protesters’ use of NWA’s song “Fuck the Police” to express their outrage over the legalization of Solidarity in Poland in 1989, Dyson (2007) argued that as an oppositional language, Hip-Hop traverses local boundaries and borders (p. 49).

Reflecting this global spread of Hip-Hop, signed by 300 Hip-Hop activists, pioneers, and UN delegates, the HipHop Declaration of Peace, presented to the United Nations on May 16, 2001, recognizes Hip-Hop’s evolution into an “international culture of peace and prosperity” and clarifies the culture’s (or “kulture” as it is intentionally spelled in the declaration) meaning, purpose and intentions in several principles, the first of which states: "Hiphop (Hip´Hop) is a term that describes our independent collective consciousness. Ever growing, it is commonly expressed through such elements as Breakin, Emceein, Graffiti Art, Deejayin, Beatboxin, Street Fashion, Street Language, Street Knowledge and Street Entrepreneurialism." Hip-Hop was created by and for young people and as a result of its global spread has since grown into an international culture and language employed by marginalized and oppressed people around the world.

Given this context, it is not surprising how scholars writing about Black English, literacies and Hip-Hop language (HHL) argue that Hip-Hop provides a way to examine the connections between language, power and ideology. Hip-Hop's remixes of words and phrases offer sociocultural, political and linguistic critiques while constituting a creative cultural production. The way in which Hip-Hop changes the spelling of words (as in the above case of "kulture") constitutes both a critique of cultural hegemony and a form of cultural production (Richardson, 2006; Smitherman, 2006). Warren Olivio (2001) noted this as serving to both affirm Black English and to "[call] attention to the arbitrariness of dominant spelling conventions, and to the ways that these conventions reflect the values of mainstream society…[which] indicates a more general critique of linguistic standards, of the social inequities they help to reproduce, and of the constraints they impose on linguistic and cultural practices" (pp. 103-4, see also Smitherman, 2006 pp. 96-103 and Campbell, 2006, pp. 330-1). Many remixed words not only expand a lexicon, but they also wage social critiques, highlighting unique problems that disproportionately affect the lives of poor and low-income people, and people of color. For example, Smitherman (2006) observed how the "dope" from the crack/cocaine epidemic became "dope beats and lyrics," and the "lethal injections" of state-sanctioned murder became "lyrical lethal injections." Consequently, these dope beats and lyrical lethal injections can be used to "hip" audiences to realities of power, privilege, and oppression, and to get people to "hop" to a higher level of awareness and way of being and living in the world (KRS-One & Marley Marl, 2007). Thus, many argue that Hip-Hop can be a counterhegemonic discourse which challenges traditional boundaries of the public sphere—from the streets to the classroom—and makes possible the entrance of counter narratives that can humanize and highlight realities that are too often left out of public discourse and academic and political dialogue (Stovall 2006; Kirkland, 2010) domestically and globally.

Reflecting on his research on language, literacy, and Hip-Hop in youth culture, David E. Kirkland (2009) said that with Hip-Hop, young people are able to "use language compellingly to speak back to structures of power" (p. 224); creating a language that is their own, Hip-Hop "gives them a space and a way to communicate, to participate, and to be" (p. 225); and

> it has a deep structure that speaks to those conditions of powerlessness…It also speaks to the possibility of agitation…It's very much the "Spoken Soul" of Claude Brown. It's Shirley Brice Heath's *Ways with Words*. It's the sorrow songs of W.E.B. Du Bois…It's not only a prophetic voice. It's a political voice, a voice of propaganda, a voice of provocation. It's also a voice of humanity. Sometimes it's used to expose our dirty little secrets. Other times it's used to express, in its simplest form, our hearts" (p. 226).

For those youths who identify with the Hip-Hop generation, Kirkland (2008) questions: "Why, in a world where Hip-Hop has become such a pivotal force in the lives of youth, aren't educators using Hip-Hop to help youth make sense of and change their worlds?" (p. 2).

Advocates of Hip-Hop based education (HHBE) argue that Hip-Hop enables teachers to create empowering and academic and developmentally enriching classrooms where teachers can meet students where they are, in terms of learning styles and cultures, to build upon students' pre-existing expertise derived from their already lived and learned experiences (Stovall, 2006; Low, 2006; Kirkland, 2010). As evidence of this claim, Kirkland (2007) and Hill (2009) have documented how Hip-Hop can be used to meet standards for the teaching of English language arts. Hill (2009) documented his use of Hip-Hop texts to teach literature as part of his ethnographic study on his yearlong high school English class. His “Hip Hop Lit” course was designed for students to “‘develop the ability to read and write in a manner that allows one to de-center dominant (hegemonic) conceptions of reality and relocate the specific experiences, values, and codes of the hip-hop community from the periphery to the center’” (Hill, 2008, p. 263 cited in Hill, 2009, p. 18). All of the course texts were Hip-Hop texts, presented in written form, to teach literary terms and devices, and to engage in traditional and nontraditional literary analysis, interpretation and criticism. The description of the course on the syllabus explained, “This course will examine various elements of literary interpretation and criticism through the lens of hip-hop culture. Students will encounter, learn, and demonstrate traditional and nontraditional methods of literary analysis and critique using hip-hop texts as the primary source” (Hill, 2009, p. 18). Course activities involved journal writing and oral sharing of entries, group reading of new texts, reader response, and group discussions in which students debated about the major themes and meanings of texts and their literary techniques. Students also created their own texts during unit projects to further demonstrate their understanding of literary devices. As a result, Hill noted how students developed complex relationships with texts, many of which arose out of the way in which the texts connected with the students lived experiences. Throughout the course, Hill also documented how his students constructed complex identities as a result of engaging with Hip-Hop texts. Hill concluded: “hip-hop pedagogy reflects an alternate, more expansive vision of pedagogy that reconsiders the relationship among students, teachers, texts, schools, and the broader social world” (p. 120).

Stovall (2006) argued that the relevance of Hip-Hop and poetics for many urban classrooms makes it such that students are better positioned to make connections between their lives and that of the poets they read as well as with other academic subjects. Others have documented how when used as a scaffold for learning across the curriculum, HHBE provides teachers with opportunities to develop students' critical consciousness (Morrell and Duncan-Andrade, 2002) and attend to the challenge of teaching to an increasingly diverse classroom, especially when the teacher and/or assigned texts do not reflect the culture of the students. In their incorporation of Hip-Hop into English classes, Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2008) used Hip-Hop texts and culture to create engaging pedagogy and curriculum to foster academic literacies. In their seven-week poetry unit, Morrell and Duncan-Andrade had students analyze eight Hip-Hop texts alongside eight canonical poems to assist in normalizing the academic practice of analyzing and dialoging about literary themes. For example, one group assignment had students take one pairing and present an analysis of the texts' literary themes, a comparative analysis between the two texts, and provide a guiding question for class discussion.

Christopher Emdin's (2010) research demonstrates how Hip-Hop can be used as an effective teaching tool in urban science classrooms. Emdin wrote about his work with middle- and high school science classes and how the skills required of a scientist, or *science-mindedness*—keen imagination, the ability to draw connections between two seemingly disparate ideas, strong logical reasoning and analytical skills, and experimentation—for example, are the same qualities found in a skilled emcee (Emdin, 2013). Thus, Emdin argued that by building upon the skills of the Hip-Hop generation, teachers can more easily make connections between their Hip-Hop based skills and those required of scientists.

Additionally, with 70% of Hip-Hop record sales being in the suburbs (Smitherman, 2006; Campbell, 2007), Hip-Hop scholars argue that its texts can teach middle-class/White America about that which often remains hidden: the rollback of civil rights gains, and the poverty, the hunger, and the brilliance and humanity of Black and Brown people living in city spaces.

According to Campbell (2007), “Hip-hop has…humanized…ghetto blackness, given it a name, an identity, a voice, and a viable economy of expression. Moreover, Hip-Hop has made suburban youth aware of the lived experience…of their inner-city counterparts, giving them cause to seek alternatives to the banality of suburban middle-class life” (pp. 328-9).

At the same time, when sex, drugs, and violence sell movies, records, and books, the success of Hip-Hop and its entrance into mass media risks representing the culture in a way that promotes negative stereotypes of youth of color, women, and non-hetero bodies. Some of the most salient and prevalent critiques of Hip-Hop education have related to the representations and messages that dominate the Hip-Hop industry (McWhorter, 2008; Rose, 2009). Many of these arguments have spoken to the way in which Hip-Hop is represented in the mainstream media with content and images flooding the airwaves that center around sex, drugs, violence, hypermasculinity, materialism, and criminal activity, which opponents of Hip-Hop use to argue that *all* of Hip-Hop promotes bad values and deviant behavior, especially for poor, Black, and Brown people, or minimally, that unlike the creative products of the civil rights, “hip hop creates nothing” (McWhorter, 2003). In addition to their hasty generalizations, in these critiques, Hip-Hop is dehistoricized, essentialized, and the music *industry* is consistently conflated with Hip-Hop *culture*.

Shedding light on the negative attitudes around Hip-Hop education, and Hip-Hop Debate specifically is the public’s response to when I launched the Tacoma Urban Debate League with a Hip-Hop debate workshop at Pacific Lutheran University in 2007. A *News Tribune* article (Santos, 2007) on the event generated nearly 50 online comments, many of which reflected negative representations and stereotypes of Hip-Hop culture. Opponents challenged the credibility of the workshop’s curriculum as “useless academic inclusion of irrelevant hip hop culture," "a waste of taxpayer money" that "would lead to higher incarceration rates" and "criminal activity," and that rather "these students should all be drafted into the U.S. Armed Forces where they might be of some use after getting some discipline." In addition to reflecting an ignorance of Hip-Hop history and general ageism, also implicit in these arguments is that young audiences are passive, uncritical media consumers, stripped of agency and primed to be manipulated for corporate gain (Fisherkeller 2002; Buckingham 2008).

Other opponents of Hip-Hop education express concern that incorporating Hip-Hop into education can be culturally irresponsible if it manifests as a manipulative pedagogical tool instead of facilitating a culturally relevant, creative, and authentic investigation into course content. In her article "Using Hip-Hop in schools: Are we appreciating culture or raping rap?" Aryanna Brown (2005) posed concerns about Hip-Hop being used as a mere "hook" in the teaching of English, or that when comparing Hip-Hop texts alongside canonical texts a Eurocentric ideology and culture can still maintains its hegemony as a universal referent for all things academic and artistically superior and reinforce false dichotomies of "high" versus "low" culture. While this is nevertheless worthy of attention, this risk can be minimized by creating learning environments in which youth evaluate texts on their own merit (Hill, 2009), or when students are engaged in creative production of Hip-Hop texts, or when the texts facilitate critical media literacy (Morrell, 2008; Morrell, Dueñas, Garcia and López, 2013).

Additional literature on HHBE talks about the way in which it can assist students in engaging in processes of critical thinking and synthesizing observations about the world in such a way that is not only limited to descriptions about problems, but also facilitates explorations about marginalized issues like race, class, gender, xenophobia, and sexuality so that students can also discuss potential solutions (Stovall, 2006; Low, 2006). Even for those students who don't listen to Hip-Hop, it can assist in talking about pressing issues that often times fall outside the purview of traditional classroom curriculum or even civic discourse, like issues of social, economic and political inequalities and problems that disproportionately affect marginalized communities (Stovall, 2006).

Despite the rich linguistic and rhetorical registers in the African Diaspora found in language and literacy practices in the United States, no research exists to document the use of African American literacies, rhetorics, or Hip-Hop in high school debate and the related pedagogical implications for the development and use of academic literacies, civic engagement or the formation of identities. At the same time, Hip-Hop based education is still a fairly new field of inquiry and practice; empirical research, although growing, is limited such that a formal theory of Hip-Hop education has yet to be codified. Consequently, my research also draws upon the theoretical contributions from sociocultural and critical literacy theories, which, when combined with research on debate, Hip-Hop, and African American literacies, languages and rhetorics, provides a more stable foundation upon which to ground my research.

Sociocultural Theories of Language and Learning

Mina Shaughnessy (1976) cautioned that: "...the greatest barrier to our work with [our students] is our ignorance of them and of the very subject we have contracted to teach" (p. 238). Public lives and civic spaces have dramatically shifted from the monocultural, nationalistic order of the 19th and 20th centuries when schooling was intended to standardize national language at the expense of dialect difference, and when immigrants and indigenous students were expected to be educated in the "proper language of the colonizer" (NLG, 1996, p. 68). In contrast, the 21st century is characterized by civic pluralism with ever growing cultural and linguistic diversity and global linkages, necessitating that ELA instruction (and pre-service teacher education programs) consider whether or not curricula and schools impart language and literacies that can support students in navigating a globalizing world with new technologies, myriad discourses, and hybrid identities and languages.

Despite the fact that the linguistic and cultural diversity of student populations in schools is increasing exponentially, academic outcomes suggest that pedagogy has not caught up (Howard, 2007). Consequently, as Ronald Takaki (2008) argued:

> what is needed in our own perplexing times is not so much a "distant" mirror, as one that is "different." While the study of the past can provide collective self-knowledge, it often reflects the scholar's particular perspective or view of the world. What happens when historians leave out many of America's peoples? What happens, to borrow the words of Adrienne Rich, "when someone with the authority of a teacher" describes our society, and "you are not in it"? Such an experience can be disorienting - "a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing ” (p. 129).

Although Takaki’s different mirror was referring to the importance of having a rich understanding of United States history from a multicultural perspective, his words ring true for educators seeking to navigate the attendant complexities, challenges, and possibilities inherent in teaching and learning in culturally and linguistically diverse 21st century classrooms. Sociocultural theory provides a useful frame. Sociocultural theory emerges in the 1980s in response to ethnocentric “great divide” theories between literacy and orality, that propagated hierarchies of intelligence and culture between in “modern” and “traditional” societies, and upheld other dichotomous framings of literacy: formal/informal schooling, literate/illiterate, cultured/uncultured, and oral/literate.

Challenging great divide theories. Seminal to the development of sociocultural theory, Sylvia Scribner and Michael Cole (1981/1988) refuted claims about the bifurcated nature of literacy, schooling, and learning, including the perspective that literate and nonliterate people and societies are at a different stage of intellectual development and civilization. From the outset of their article *Unpacking Literacy*, Scribner and Cole used David Olson's (1977) framing of literacy as an example of the deleterious implications of upholding a dichotomous view of literacy including theorizing about the "psychological consequences" of oral versus literate communication modes and formal versus informal schooling, with literate communication and formal schooling linked to higher modes of thinking and being, and the expository essay being the hallmark of literacy. While Olson and his contemporaries implied that texts are context-free and ideologically neutral, Scribner and Cole interrogated assumptions implicit in judgments about the social importance of imparting a particular set of writing skills in students whose writing has been deemed deficient, and urged readers to examine if these judgments consider the values and pragmatic needs of the individual and their respective social community—developing certain occupational, social, cultural, or civic skills, for example—or if these judgments are rooted in assumptions about the causal relationship between writing and cognition. Dominant conceptions of writing, with the text presumed to have one said meaning and logicality, and as such can only be fostered through prolonged schooling, occludes a critique of the logical infallibility of text, the dynamic process of making meaning, and the intellectual labor driving writing in out-of-school spaces. In a great divide view of literacy, a certain type of text and mode of learning are elevated above all others: "What is missing in this picture is any detailed knowledge of the role and functions of writing outside of school, aspirations and values which sustain it, and the intellectual skills it demands and fosters" (Scribner and Cole, 1981/1988, p. 61). Scribner and Cole contested a sole focus on culture as a marker of psychology. Even if writing created new modes of thinking for certain cultures during certain time periods, that does not warrant the claim that writing will necessarily have the same effect under different historical conditions, social contexts, or provides cognitive benefits to the same degree as other literacies.

Scribner and Cole took issue with theorists who contended that different cognitive functions were required in written versus oral communication, and that formal schools were inherently necessary to cultivate writers who could in turn uniquely develop "context–independent abstract thought" (p. 59) and higher-level cognitive functioning for objectively theorizing about the world beyond mere empiricism. Without evidence comparing literate and non-literate individuals with the same social location within the same time period, great divide theorists failed to sufficiently warrant their claim about the psychological consequences of literacy development.

Examining "literacy without schooling" in West Africa, Scribner and Cole (1981/1988) documented the writing produced by the Vai in rural northwestern Liberia who created their own phonetic writing system that was retained alongside Arabic and Roman alphabets. Using anthropological ethnography and experimental psychology, Scribner and Cole investigated the Vai's acquisition and use of literacy. Assuming that literate and nonliterate members of the Vai share very similar social locations such that they make for a better subject comparison for the relationship between literacy and cognition, the study set out to understand "*how* Vai people acquire literacy skills, *what* these skills are, and *what* they do with them" (p. 62). Toward this end, Scribner and Cole compared the literacy of English, Arabic and Vai language learners.

English was taught in schools mostly outside Vai country and as such was the least visible script in the countryside, although English was the official writing script of national economic and political institutions. Arabic was learned through formal training but not around a blackboard in a school building. However, most Arabic student learners were trained in recitation not comprehension. Vai script, in contrast, was not formally taught in the sense of through traditional notions of schooling, and as such, "knowledge of Vai script might be characterized as 'literacy without education'" (p. 63). The transmission of Vai writing occurred throughout their society (albeit among the men) and outside of formal institutions and without assistance from trained professionals. Over the course of two weeks or two months, a community member acted as the teacher employing dialogical learning activities wherein the only teaching materials were scripts the teacher might have in their possession (which unlike Arabic scripts, were secular in nature). Although a bulk a texts were personal in nature, the function of texts ranged from record keeping, local administration, personal correspondence (most common) to historical preservation of Vai culture. Rarely did Scribner and Cole find evidence of poetic or expository Vai writings, rather learning Vai script was to preserve information and to communicate socially and politically: Vai people "developed highly diversified uses for writing and that personal values, pride of culture, hopes of gain—a host of pragmatic, ideological and intellectual factors—sustain popular literacy" (p. 66).

Cognitively, Scribner and Cole (1981/1988) "found no evidence of marked differences in performance on logical and classificatory tasks between non-schooled literates and nonliterates" (p. 66). To reach this conclusion, Scribner and Cole constructed a series of activities to measure the functionality of literacy. When comparing the ability of a full range of literate and nonliterate groups and their ability to explain a board game to someone unfamiliar with it without the game being present, Vai and Arabic letter writers were better than all nonliterate groups, although English students ranked highest. In terms of memory, when subjects were asked to recall 16 items presented cumulatively over 16 trials, English students again ranked higher, but because of the nature of literacy acquisition in Arabic training, Arabic literates were better than Vai literates and nonliterates. In terms of language analysis, when tape recordings of Vai sentences were slowed down to syllable utterance at a two-second rate, Vai literates were better at decoding and constructing meaning, because "Vai script is written without word division, so that reading a text requires as a first step the analysis of separate characters followed by their integration into meaningful linguistic units" (p. 67).

As a result of these three tests, Scribner and Cole (1981/1988) concluded that they "provide the strongest experimental evidence to date that activities involved in reading and writing may in fact promote specific language-processing and cognitive skills" (p. 68). At the same time, "Vai literates routinely carry out a variety of tasks using their script which are carried out no better (and perhaps worse) than their English-educated peers who have completed a costly twelve year course of school study" (p. 68). Thus, Scribner and Cole postulated that in societies ordered around gainful employment and social organization requiring certain literacy skills for participation, literacy acquisition would not disappear if formal schooling did. They also suggested that "An alternative possibility is that institutionalized learning programs have thus far failed to tap the wide range of 'indigenous' interests and practices which confer significance on writing" (p. 69). Furthermore, in terms of functional literacy, the type of writing that is taught in formal schooling may "generate products that meet teacher demands and academic requirements but may not fulfill any other immediate instrumental ends" (p. 69). Lastly, Scribner and Cole argued that claims about the development of discrete cognitively superior skills as being the "'inevitable outcome' of learning to use alphabetic scripts or write any kind of text are overstated" (p. 69). They explained, "Nothing in our data would support the statement quoted earlier that reading and writing entail fundamental 'cognitive restructurings' that control intellectual performance in all domains" (p. 70).

Literacy as ideological. Harvey J. Graff (1982/1988) also shifted away from an autonomous model of literacy, challenging assumptions about the role of literacy diffusion in social, economic, political, and individual progress. He argued these assumptions are ideological in nature, and provided an alternative conceptualization of literacy. Although he argued that the definition of literacy should include basic or primary levels of reading and writing, he wrote, "Viewing literacy in the abstract as a foundation in skills that can be developed, lost, or stagnated is meaningless without connection to the possessors of those skills" (p. 83). Thus, we must examine the context in which reading and writing occurs:

> how, when, where, why, and to whom literacy was transmitted, the meanings that were assigned to it, the uses to which it was put, the demand placed on literate abilities and the degrees to which they were met, the changing extent of social restrictedness in the distribution and diffusion of literacy, and their real and symbolic differences that emanated under social condition of literacy among the population. *The meaning and contribution of literacy cannot be presumed but rather must be a distinct focus of research*. (p. 83)

Graff (1982/1988) departed from great divide theories that upheld value-based distinctions between "literate and illiterate, written and oral, print and script" (p.86). He explained, *"The history of literacy has been biased toward explaining change, particularly as one of the key elements in the development of the 'modern,' industrialized West"* (p. 87). Graff especially disagreed with the oral-literate dichotomy, which he saw as complementary communicative processes. He contended that looking at three institutions: the state, the church, and commerce—that maintain their "cultural and political hegemony over the social functions of literacy" (p. 88)—exposes the contradictions inherent in a dichotomous framing of literacy. For example the codification of Protestantism and Catholicism from the sixteenth century onward occurred overwhelmingly through oral communication via teaching and preaching. In terms of commerce, even during times and in areas with low levels of print-based literacy, trade, commerce and industry still progressed: "Early industrialization, as the evidence from a number of studies agrees, owed little to literacy or the school; its demands upon the labor force were rarely intellectual or cognitive in nature. In fact, industrialization often reduced opportunities for schooling and, consequently, rates of literacy fell as it took its toll on the 'human capital' on which it fed" (p. 88). Furthermore, the training required to work in the industrial economy may also be more dependent on visual literacy versus alphabetic. In Sweden, around the time of the Reformation, reading literacy was a legal requirement and as such, very high levels of reading literacy existed among the population, however, not because of formal schooling. The teaching of literacy not only occurred outside of formal schooling, but also focused on reading not writing; an increase in the teaching of reading was not developed simultaneously alongside the teaching of writing until the mid-19th century with the development Sweden's public school system; *"The relation of literacy with social development points up to the highly variable paths to societal change and maturity"* (p. 90).

Lastly, Graff (1982/1988) emphasized the hegemonic function of literacy diffusion especially in the transition to industrialized society where schooling became essential to the maintenance of social stability; schooling was to promote "the values, attitudes, and habits considered essential to the maintenance of social order and the persistence of integration and cohesion" (p. 91). In this sense the provision of literacy is ideological, and difficulty arises in trying to quantitatively measure literacy if it is divorced from a qualitative examination of its application: for whom, whose issues, and to what extent does literacy serve an individual, community, or society?

Writing a year later, Suzanne de Castell and Allan Luke (1983/1988) similarly expressed a counterargument to a conception of literacy that connotes "context-neutral, content-free, skill-specific competence which can be imparted to children with almost scientific precision. Literacy so seen bypasses controversial claims about what curriculum is worthwhile, what moral, social and personal principles should operate within the educational context" (p. 159). To illustrate the value-laden nature of literacy instruction, de Castell and Luke trace the shifting goals within classical, progressive, and technocratic paradigmatic approaches to literacy instruction, describing how each paradigm is informed by ideologies, cultural assumptions and values with respect to the presumed functions of literacy and its acquisition. For example, the classical literacy paradigm was designed to have a “civilizing” effect. Concerned with reducing poverty and crime connected with illiteracy in Canada, literacy instruction during the late 19th century was to impart the cultural sensibilities of Great Britain. In the United States, schooling was designed to secure economic independence and civic participation with instruction modeled off of Plato’s pedagogical methods in *The Republic*: “rote-learning, repetition, drill, copying, and memorization (p. 163),” which were aimed at developing the faculties of reason and proper morality.

In 1984, Sylvia Scribner (1984/1988) wrote how the definition and measurement of literacy is ambiguous, contested, and contradictory: “Literacy has neither a static nor a universal essence” (Scribner, 1984/1988, p. 72). She argued this definitional ambiguity massively implicates and complicates the ability to understand the nature of illiteracy and literacy, the salience of programmatic prescriptions for illiteracy’s amelioration, and structures our perception and judgment about literate or nonliterate individuals: what they need, what they should learn, how literacy should be acquired, and for what ends. To understand the dynamic and contested conceptions of literacy and the goals of its acquisition requires attention to the different social contexts (culture, geography, scale, temporality) in which these definitions and corresponding functions are generated: “Here we are involved, not with fact but with considerations of value, philosophy, and ideology similar to those that figure prominently in debates about the purposes and goals of schooling” (Scribner, 1984/1988, p. 72).

To problematize previous definitions of literacy, Scribner (1984) provided a deeper examination of the socially constructed meanings and problematic boundaries of literacy through a discussion of three common literacy metaphors: “literacy as adaptation, literacy as power, and literacy as a state of grace” (p. 73). *Literacy as adaptation* is pragmatic and functional, geared toward ensuring that individual members of society have the necessary skills to navigate employment, civic obligations, and day-to-day social affairs. Even here, determining the boundaries of functional literacy and delineating between necessary versus optional skills are murky: how can one determine the standards of functional literacy when the functions differ by scale, social context, and time? Definitions may even be at odds with one another when, for example, one compares the way literacy is adapted to suit the individual needs in a local context versus its adaptation to fulfill the needs of the broader society. Additionally, Scribner acknowledged that new technologies present “new systems of literacy” (p. 75) and she hypothesized that the introduction and evolution of these technologies may present new literacy demands and new variables in uneven literacy acquisition. *Literacy as power* relates to the view that literacy supports the advancement of a group or community. Here, the enhancement of literacy skills are seen as a mode of emancipation for less powerful groups, and as a means to create a more just society. Scribner noted however, that the United Nations national literacy campaigns cast doubt on the necessary relationship between literacy and improving social and material conditions of the poor in developing countries. Instead, evidence from the USSR, China, Cuba, and in Tanzania suggests the opposite pattern: movements for social justice have been the prerequisite for mobilizing rapid expansion of literacy across a population. The last metaphor, *literacy as a state of grace,* transcends the political or economic functionality of literacy and instead assumes it is salvific, a mechanism for developing virtuousness (religious or secular), and a more cultured and evolved individual: “the literate individual’s life derives its meaning and significance from intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual participation in the accumulated creations and knowledge of humankind, made available through the written word” (p. 77). For this to be substantiated, evidence must demonstrate how book knowledge is similarly valued and used across diverse oral and literate cultures to this end.

Cross-cultural approaches to literacy. In addition to Scriber and Cole’s (1981) work examining the development and use of literacy across cultures, by examining literacy events Shirley Brice Heath (1982/2011; 1983/2009) documented how literacies, including cultural and oral features, are adapted to serve and reflect important social needs and values. Heath described a literacy event as being one in which a written text is read and interpreted by one or more people and informs how people interact orally and in written form about that initial written text. Attention to the interaction around the initial written text may reveal “there are more literacy events which call for appropriate knowledge of forms and uses of speech events than there are actual occasions for extended reading or writing” (Heath, 1982/2011, p. 446).

In 1982 Shirley Byrce Heath (1982/2011) published an article on some of her findings from a ten-year ethnography of communication in the Carolinas, all of which would later be published in *Ways with Words*. In this 1982 article she focused on one of the communities from her ethnography, Trackton, a working-class all-Black community in the Carolinas where all of the adults can read and write, and parents care about their children doing well in school. Reading and writing in Trackton was a social practice and meaning-making was socially negotiated. Adults read and wrote mostly for social purposes and frequently did so together, orally discussing the meanings and implications of these letters at length; thus “written information almost never stood alone in Trackton; it was reshaped and reworded into an oral mode” (p. 451).

Consequently, Heath concluded that there is no clear boundary or hierarchy between written and oral literacy practices. As written and spoken modes of communication "seem to supplement and reinforce each other in a unique pattern" (p. 460), it is "impossible to characterize Trackton through existing descriptions of either the oral or the literate traditions; seemingly, it is neither, and it is both" (p. 460).

Sociocultural perspectives on literacy pedagogy. Sociocultural theories of language and learning emphasize how literacy pedagogy must reflect how people develop and use language and literacies in unique social, cultural, and historical contexts. Fundamental to the development of a sociocultural theory of pedagogy, were the research findings and pedagogical implications reported by education scholar and researcher Luis Moll, teacher-researcher, Cathy Amanti, and anthropologists Deborah Neff and Norma Gonzalez (1992), who documented and reported findings from a collaborative qualitative research project between teachers, researchers, and working-class Mexican households in Tucson, Arizona. The goal of the project was to "draw upon the knowledge and skills found in local households" (p. 132) to "capitalize on household and other community resources" (p. 132) in order to improve teaching practices. Combining ethnographic observations and open-ended interviews with the collection of life histories and case studies, the research team set out to "portray accurately the complex functions of households within their socio-historical contexts" (p. 132), examine classroom practices, and develop after-school study groups with teachers, out of which emerged new pedagogical work that bridged household- and community-based literacies with classroom curricula to scaffold and enrich teaching and learning.

The researchers examined the unique sociopolitical and economic context of a border region between Mexico and the United States in which the students lived. The researchers examined the social and labor history of the households and their “funds of knowledge,” the “historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and the skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being” (p. 133), which later assisted teachers in grasping the pre-existing and transportable knowledge and skills developed in the students’ community and households that can be drawn upon in the classroom to craft more engaging, relevant and effective lesson plans and classroom activities. To be sure, the researchers explained how

> Funds of knowledge is not meant to replace the anthropological concept of culture, it is more precise for our purposes because of its emphasis on strategic knowledge and related activities essential in households’ functioning, development, and well-being. It is the specific funds of knowledge pertaining to the social, economic, and productive activities of people in a local region... (p. 139)

The study observed how funds of knowledge were being drawn upon within “flexible, adaptive and active” (p. 133) and reciprocal social networks to assist families in navigating social and economic changes and challenges. Within these networks were multiple “teachers” who were trusted and knew “the child as a ‘whole’ person, not merely as a ‘student’—taking into account or having knowledge about the multiple spheres of activity within which the child is enmeshed” (pp.133-4)—which the researchers described as being “thick” and “multi-stranded” relationships versus the typical “thin” and “single-stranded” one between student and teacher wherein the teacher rarely draws upon the child’s funds of knowledge.

Another important observation was the role of the child’s level of participation in these out-of-school learning environments: children were not “passive bystanders, as they seem in the classrooms, but active participants in a broad range of activities mediated by these social relationships” (p. 134). Outside of school, the children were likely to assist in economic labor, facilitate language translation with outside institutions, help with chores, and care for family members; and, “Much of the teaching and learning is motivated by the children’s interests and questions; in contrast to classrooms, knowledge is obtained by the children, not imposed by the adults” (p. 134).

How to make pedagogical use of these funds of knowledge in formal classrooms was the key question. In the first phase of the study, the researchers spoke with teachers about their classroom and household observations and then found ways to incorporate this new knowledge into innovative curriculum. The second phase of the study consisted of a collaborative research project with households, the findings from which informed new pedagogical practices. To begin, 10 teachers participated in a number of workshops on qualitative methods “including ethnographic observations, interviews, the writing of field notes, data management, and analysis” (p. 135). Eight of the teachers selected three households to visit and conducted 25 visits, 100 observations, and interviews over the course of a semester.

Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) presented the case study of one of such collaborations between a classroom teacher, Cathy Amanti, anthropologist, Deborah Neff, and their household visits with the Lopez family, and the subsequent alteration of Amanti’s curricula. Prior to the first home visit, Neff was aware of her unfamiliarity with the family and noted her own subjectivity and its potential to affect her observations and interviews. Amanti was worried about going out into the field for the first time and striking a balance between maintaining rapport with families while conducting interviews. For Amanti, Neff’s presence as a seasoned researcher was very useful in learning this juggling act. To divide up the research tasks, Amanti conducted interviews in Spanish while Neff observed the overall context and made notes on how to improve the interview protocol. Each time they visited the house, they asked questions about Amanti's student, Carlos Lopez, and made observations about the house, taking note of and asking about family artifacts like photographs, trophies, and books, which provided an opportunity to learn about the Lopez family history, literacies, and important social networks. This research collaboration between a teacher and an anthropologist is noteworthy. Neff noted that Amanti's role was critical in establishing rapport and getting the Lopez' to open up in the interviews because she was respected as the family's son's teacher. Amanti said how she benefited from Neff's experience with interviewing by "balancing the use of the questionnaire and letting it go to probe on emergent issues" (p. 136).

The study enabled the teacher-researchers to discover overlooked funds of knowledge in students' households and corresponding social and religious networks, and learn more about students' interests, both of which could be immediately put to use in the classroom. For example, Amanti discovered that 50 percent of her students were international travellers, many spending summers in Mexico. By being able to juxtapose the different economic and political realities in Mexico versus the United States, "These children have had the background experiences to explore in-depth issues that tie in with a sixth grade curriculum, such as the study of other countries, different forms of government, economic systems, and so on" (p. 137). Amanti and Neff explained how their qualitative methods of research were essential to collect data that could yield information about the famiy's experiences and funds of knowledge and as a result, develop a more complete understand of the student. This helped Amanti take this information and transform it into an instructional activity (p. 137.

In addition to the teachers developing new pedagogies and devising engaging and academically enriching classroom units by drawing upon students' funds of knowledge, Neff explained how their research was also able to get underneath the surface, focusing more on the whole child, exposing stereotypes, false judgments and assumptions, and strengthen relationships between teachers and their students' families.

Our students come into our classrooms with social and cultural wealth from their families and communities, which should be seen as assets upon which educators can build and scaffold learning. Voluminous empirical research supports embracing a hybridity of discourses, as opposed to having students coat check their cultures, families, communities, or languages at the door when they enter schools, classrooms, or any learning environment. Gutiérrez (2008) argues that learning environments can foster a "Sociocritical Third Space" in which educators can foster powerful literacies by honoring the diverse language and literacy practices of our young scholars and leaders and the cultures and traditions from which they come. She resists the boundaries between and false dichotomies of home and school, and formal and informal learning, and brings attention to what "takes hold as children and youth move in and across the various settings and contexts of their everyday lives" (p. 151).

Gutiérrez (2008) writes in the face of tremendous forces in school districts, cities, states, and the federal Department of Education, that privilege a market-based approach to "reforming" education for poor and immigrant youth, which is predicated on an ideology of sameness and meritocracy, assuming that there exists a level playing field for all regardless of race, social mobility, gender, primary language, country of origin, geography, etcetera. This business model endorses a monolingual, monocultural, one-size-fits-all curricula and policies driven by high-stakes assessments that are presumed to be objective, ideologically neutral, and accurate measures of intelligence and academic progress. In this context, Gutiérrez aspires to highlight approaches to literacy instruction that address a bankrupt and grossly oversimplified picture of the demographics and subjectivities in 21st century schools and communities in order to forge a "new vision organized around robust and equity-oriented criteria for creating a more just and democratic educational system in an increasingly complex, transnational, and hybrid world" (p. 148).

Gutiérrez (2008) presented findings from a longitudinal study of high school students from migrant-farmworker backgrounds who attended a four-week summer residential educational project at UCLA that she describes as having a

> rich curriculum, dense with learning actively organized around sociocultural views of learning and development, a situated Sociocritical literacy, and the related theoretical concepts of the Third Space...in which students begin to reconceive who they are and what they might be able to accomplish academically and beyond" (p. 148).

She describes the program as being rooted in a notion of "cosmopolitanism characterized by the ideals and practices of a shared humanity, a profound obligation with others, boundary crossing, and intercultural exchange in which difference is celebrated without being romanticized" (p. 149). The fostering of such a space was made possible through emphasizing "sociocritical literacy...a historicizing literacy that privileges and is contingent upon students' sociohistorical lives" (p. 149). There was an acknowledgment of the powerful literacies occurring in daily life, inside and outside of formal institutions of learning that were "oriented toward social critical thought" (p. 149). A key feature of this literacy is "its attention to contradictions in and between texts lived and studied, institutions...and sociocultural practice, locally experienced and historically influenced" (p. 149), which expands the scope of academic literacies and encourages the inclusion of literacies like reading and writing as well as "performative activities with transformative ends" (p. 149).

Gutiérrez (2008) made distinctions between two non-mutually exclusive types of learning, both of which are found in the Third Space. Vertical learning is typically found *within* traditional schooling, in which curricula and instruction is supposed to develop core competencies within a particular designated space and time. Horizontal learning occurs *across* multiple spaces, contexts, and practices including in conversations while breaking bread or walking to class, or in digital realms. Adding to these concepts of learning, Gutiérrez adds an "interactional matrix" which is constituted by diverse language forms and practices and helps promote Third Spaces (p. 149).

This space allowed for the honoring of the narratives of migrant students in the programs. These the "syncretic testimonies," which were a "hybrid text, a sociopolitical narrative shared orally" developed in a safe and respectful environment and "written using the traditional conventions of academic texts and the editorial assistance of peers and instructors" (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 149). Given the context in which the testimonio is produced—within a classroom with peers and educators—it is a "coproduction, imbued with the author's story and life history and also with those of other students, the institute's staff" (p. 150) as well as Gutiérrez mediation of the curriculum and pedagogical environment. Students created these testimonios by combining their narratives with preexisting and developing knowledge of theory, politics, culture, and history. This hybrid text opened up opportunities for students to use their "complete linguistic tool kit" (p. 150), making new meanings about themselves and the larger world

Carol Lee (1995) also reframes the local and everyday literacy practices of her students to demonstrate their power in literary interpretation because she was concerned with the dominant and misconceived representations of literacy "achievement gaps" as being attributable to the cultural deficits of underperforming students. In her documentation of an extensive research intervention in two American high schools, not only does Lee push back against cultural deficit theories, but she expresses concern with the approaches to teaching literacy that suggest a chasm between what the students know and what the teachers do with that knowledge.

Through creating and researching culturally based cognitive apprenticeships, Lee (1995) troubles these debates about gaps in literacy acquisition and literacy instruction by looking at the efficacy of using ethnically diverse literature and explicit reading comprehension strategies that lovingly embrace and draw upon students' linguistic and cultural knowledge to scaffold literary instruction. Lee (1995) argues that when students confront texts with culturally specific scripts, that combining general, task specific strategies and prior social and cultural knowledge complement complex literary interpretation and can help students comprehend complex texts generate insightful interpretations.

Essential to this process is viewing English language varieties as assets not deficits. Lee (1995) built upon studies that emerged in the 1970s documenting the rich complexity and value of African-American language. She extends that conversation to investigate the corresponding pedagogical implications for reading and writing with respect to instructional models that draw upon the linguistic wealth of African-American students, like the creative and figurative qualities found in signifying, linking language used in the community with language used in literature to scaffold literary instruction.

However, language use does not mean metacognitive awareness of that usage. For example, just because one can discern between figurative and literal expressions does not equate to an awareness of doing so or an ability to apply those same techniques to unfamiliar complex texts. Lee (1995) created learning environments to explicate linguistic features to foster metacognitive awareness among her students such that they could apply their linguistic awareness to reading strategies and literary analysis.

Lee (1995) drew upon the research on cognitive apprenticeships by Collins et al. (1991), which “attempt to help students conceptualize the intellectual problem in its wholeness to situate the intellectual problem in the real world contexts and applications, and to regulate their own strategy use over the course of the problem-solving activity” (p. 613). Literary learning environments that promote this model of apprenticeship will foster an understanding of domain knowledge (general reading strategies for understanding vocabulary, syntax and phonetics), the social worlds represented in the texts, the rules and characteristics of literary genres, *as well as* the type of habits of mind necessary for literary interpretation.

Lee (1995) examined the social discourse of signifying for scaffolding literary interpretation skills, the data for which came from six classes from two urban high schools in a large Midwestern school district in the United States. All of the students were African American with graduation rates below 51%. At least 25% of the students were low-income. And approximately 85% of 11th graders who took the district-mandated reading achievement test scored at or below the 50th percentile. Four of the classes participated in the intervention and two were control groups. Lee used both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The former consisted of a pre- and post-test. The latter consisted of an evaluation of the curriculum design and practice, including an analysis of instructional discourse and discussions in whole and small group work. The transcripts of the conversations clarified findings about the connections between prior knowledge of language and learning. Furthermore, the curriculum was part of the methodology, as what was essential was the way in which the research traced the changes in students’ understanding, involvement, and independent learning over time.

Lee's (1995) results indicated a positive correlation between cultural modeling, cultural apprenticeships and academic achievement. Teachers were able to make visible and explicit the type of heuristic and problem solving skills necessary to interpret complex literature, as well as other specialized genres of communication. With these techniques, signifying could be used for scaffolding literary interpretation; the knowledge and attitudes about African American language that students have can be mapped onto literary interpretation because of the similar cognitive strategies required for comprehension and interpretation.

Another example of an apprenticeship model of learning was presented by Jean Lave (1996), whose socially situated theory of learning that undermines one that is dualistic, psychological and decontextualized. Lave warned,

> Theories that reduce learning to individual mental capacity/activity...blame marginalized people for being marginalized… Such theories are deeply concerned with individual differences, with notions of better and worse, more and less learning, and with comparison of the same across groups–of–individuals. Psychological theories of learning prescribe ideals and paths to excellence and identify the kind of individuals (by no means all) who should arrive; the absence of movement away from some putatively common starting point becomes grounds for labeling others as *sub*-normal. (p. 149)

Between 1973 and 1978, Jean Lave (1996) studied informal learning among the Vai and Gola peoples in Northwestern Liberia. The focus of this field research was the situated learning occurring in tailors' apprenticeships. A master tailor would take on one apprentice every couple of years who would be trained in the many aspects of tailoring. Instead of the apprentices merely learning how to make trousers, as an example, Lave found that they were

> learning many complex 'lessons' at once...:relations between the major social identities and divisions in Liberian society which they were in the business of dressing. They were learning to make a life, to make a living, to make clothes, to grow old enough, and

> mature enough to become master tailors, and to see the truth of the respect due to a master of their trade. (p. 151)

Lave (1996) argued that "intricately patterned relations between practices, space, time, bodies, social relationships, life courses–ubiquitous facets of ongoing communities of practice–are both the content and the principle of effectiveness of learning" (p. 154). As a result of her research, Lave's understanding of learning dramatically shifted. First, she realized the value of an apprenticeship model, which challenged the asymmetrical value assigned to formal schooling and the corresponding stereotypes associated with people educated in this manner. Not only was there an eighty-five percent completion and subsequent occupational placement rate in the apprenticeships, but also the apprentices "were without a doubt poor, *and* able, respected and self-respecting, with a 'take' on the world that had a considerable penetration of the real conditions of their lives" (p. 154). At the same time, Lave cautioned others not to assume that the model could be perfectly duplicated in other historical or social contexts because "they are historically, socially situated practices" (p. 154). Second, her unit of analysis in learning moved away from a cognitive model that privileges teachers as the transmitters of culture, to one in which learning as being the basic concept and teaching as another enterprise. A theory of learning will inform pedagogy, but the latter must be understood for the former to have any saliency. In other words, merely looking at teaching practices does not explain *how* people learn. Third, the apprenticeship was based on a situated theory of learning: learning must be contextual, not distanced from practical applications, which also implicates literacy research because "new research questions are in order, about how learning-in-practice is characteristic of schooling" (p. 155).

In light of this research, Lave (1996) posited a new theory of learning, which began with moving away from viewing learning as just epistemological, only about changing the mind and acquiring knowledge to master a set of skills to attain a tangible end goal. Developmental psychologist, Martin Packer, suggested to Lave that a theory of learning consisted of at least three components: *telos*, *subject-world relations, and learning mechanisms*. Telos meant that learning had a purpose, which encouraged seeing learning as the process of learners changing over time, or as developing "identities in practice" (p. 157), which is connected to subject-world relations—how learners are changing ontologically in terms of how they see themselves in the world, not just as constructions of the world. Learning mechanisms are simply how learners learn what they do—the modes and processes of "becoming a full participant, ways of participating, and ways in which participants and practices change...Mainly people are becoming different kinds of people" (p. 157). Learning is an aspect of changing participation in changing practices.

Seeing learning as becoming and as part of practice has important implications for research because researchers can "establish the location in which and the processes by which the most potent identity-constituting learning conjunctures occur" and then look for the "foci of identity-changing activity" (Lave, 1996, p. 162). Lave offers a way to understand literacy development as a process of individuals becoming different types of people. By looking at an individual's changing participation in the same community of practice over time, by looking at the new roles and responsibilities that people take up in that same community of practice, reflects and shapes how individuals are becoming different types of people. This can inform emergent literacy researchers in documenting the changing nature of participation as individuals engage in literacy practices in literacy events, in school and in out-of-school spaces, which can be used to trace and analyze the development of critical and academic literacies over time in competitive academic policy debate.

Sociocultural theory provides a framework to locate and analyze how young debaters are using their funds of knowledge, developing and simultaneously using oral language, reading, and writing, in unique sociocultural and historical contexts outside of compulsory education in which everyday literacies and languages are blended with academic discourses. In order to understand how social worlds, ideology and culture inform how young people are developing literacies, and how these literacies are being used in different ways and for different purposes, and subsequently seeing how students change over time, requires a sociocultural approach to locating and analyzing literacy practices.

New Literacies Studies. New Literacies Studies (NLS) adds another lens for pluralizing literacy, situating its study socioculturally, historically, and in the context of a globalizing world with new technologies, multimodal texts and increasing diversity, while attending to the inherent role of power and ideology in the framing, development, and use of literacies.

NLS frames literacy not just as a cognitive phenomenon but also as socially situated and sociocultural. When people read, write, speak, listen, decode and encode, interact with and produce texts, they are engaging in social or cultural practices, therefore the development and use of literacies manifests in different ways depending on the sociocultural context. Instead of locating literacy on a “divide” or a “continuum,” Brian Street (1993/2001) argued that literacy theorists adhering to either model failed to account for the wide-variety of social and cultural contexts in which literacy practices occur, the relationship between literacy, power structures and ideology, and oversimplified meaning-making as being located in syntax. As an alternate frame, Street posits two different models of literacy: “autonomous” versus “ideological.” An autonomous model (Goody and Watt, 1968; Olson, 1977; Ong, 1982) emphasizes literacy's cognitive effects, strips literacy from its social and cultural contexts, and implies that literacy is ideologically neutral. Using an autonomous model would limit literacy research to examining the literacies of reading and writing and their effects on cognition, assuming that these effects will be the same for everyone regardless of socioeconomic context, without questioning the dynamics of power and culture at work, and without considering: What are the specific and larger sociocultural, economic, and political contexts in which these literacies are being developed and used? Whose interests are served and whose are disposable in the further edification of these institutions? In order to make room for these types of questions, literacy research must go beyond a mere examination of reading and writing skills and their supposed "autonomous" effects, or oral/literate communicative mixes in limited social contexts, and embrace ethnographic investigations of literacies as ideologically driven social practices occurring within and across a range of structures and sociocultural settings and serving a variety of goals, which begs the question: How might literacy practices reproduce or resist asymmetrical power relations and social inequalities?

James Gee (1989, 2001, 2015a) argues that literacy studies should focus not on language but social practices surrounding the use of language, which requires determining the socially driven expectations about how to use language and communicate in different settings. What this means is that reading and writing are always "integrated with different ways of (1) using oral language; (2) of acting and interacting; (3) of knowing, valuing, and believing; and too, often (4) of using various sorts of tools and technologies" (Gee, 2015a, p. 36). Context matters. In one of his early essays on literacy published in the *Journal of Education*, Gee (1989) explained,

> At any moment we are using language we must say or write the right thing in the right way while playing the right social role and (appearing) to hold the right values, beliefs, and attitudes. Thus, what is important is not language, and surely not grammar, but *saying (writing)-doing-being-valuing-believing combinations*. (p. 6)

Gee called these combinations Discourses, which are "ways of being in the world; they are forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes" (pp. 6-7). Furthermore, he likened a Discourse to an "'identity kit,' which comes complete with the appropriate costume and instructions on how to act, talk, and often write, so as to take on a particular role that others will recognize" (p. 7).

Gee (1989) contended that a Discourse cannot be acquired through overt instruction, but rather through a prolonged enculturation, or an "apprenticeship" with those who have already mastered the Discourse. People are socialized into and inhabit multiple Discourses. The first Discourse, or *primary Discourse*, in which people are socialized, forms in the early years in the home and immediate peer group. *Secondary Discourses* are developed as people interact with public institutions outside of the home. Gee argued that it is only through the mastery of dominant Discourses that people can advantageously navigate social worlds and achieve social goods. And this mastery can be liberating "if it can be used as a 'meta-language' (a set of meta-words, meta-values, meta-beliefs) for the critique of other literacies and the way they constitute us as persons and situate us in society" (p. 9). Liberating literacies require the ability to analyze, verbalize and critique literacies and secondary Discourses; as such, primary Discourses can never be liberating literacies because they cannot provide a meta-language with which to *authentically* critique other Discourses because of the lack of fluency in other Discourses' words, values, beliefs, attitudes and styles.

Furthermore, literacy is not a set of isolable skills. Reading and writing are not contained within all Discourses, and the teaching and learning of a given Discourse that contains writing and reading involves more than just reading and writing because one is simultaneously teaching the ways of acting, behaving and believing of that Discourse. Yet Gee (1989) wrote that "correct" ways of writing and reading, "superficial features of language" (p. 11), are essential for demonstrating membership in dominant Discourses in schools and civic institutions. At the same time, Gee argued that these superficial features must be acquired early in one's life—they cannot be taught in a regular classroom. Consequently, Gee urged educators to help students see the difference between their Discourses and the dominant Discourses and the socio-political implications for seeing and navigating how power operates through Discourses. What this also means is that teachers need to apprentice students in academic social practices inside the classroom while also connecting them with the social practices outside of class that are embedded in larger institutions of power. However, Gee also noted how an apprenticeship into dominant Discourses could spell trouble for those whose other Discourses are at odds with the values, beliefs, attitudes, or stylings of the dominant Discourses.

The study of literacies is further complicated by the fact that we live in a globalizing world with increasing culturally and linguistically pluralistic classrooms, workplaces and public spheres. In 1996, a group of scholars including James Gee, Norman Fairclough, Gunther Kress, and Carmen Luke, writing as the New London Group (NLG), published "A pedagogy of multiliteracies" to account for these growing changes at the end of the 20th century. NLG urged educators to "expand the idea and scope of literacy pedagogy" beyond "a carefully restricted project—restricted to formalized, monolingual, monocultural, and rule-governed forms of language" to account for linguistic and cultural diversity and "the plurality of texts that circulate" (p. 61) including multimodal textual forms in a digital age. Among NLG's guiding questions were: "How do we ensure that differences of culture, language, and gender are not barriers to educational success? And what are the implications of these differences for literacy pedagogy?" (p. 61).

As disparities in life opportunities and local fragmentations widen, as "communities are breaking into ever more diverse and subculturally defined groupings" (NLG, 1996, p. 61), as technological advances are rapidly changing the nature of working life giving some unprecedented access over others, literacy pedagogy must adjust. A key modification is to account for the reality that there is no longer “a singular, canonical English that could or should be taught anymore” (NLG, 1996, p. 63). The NLG urged recognition of textual multiplicity and the hybridity in the “modes of meaning-making, where the textual is also related to the visual, the audio, the spatial, the behavioral, and so on” (p. 64). This textual multiplicity “focuses on modes of representation much broader than language alone” (p. 64). Additionally, instead of focusing on literacy that is predicated upon a stable and static “sound-letter correspondence,” a “singular national form of language” with a “correct usage” determined and enforced by an authoritarian kind of pedagogy, (NLG, 1996, p. 64) NLG called for an embracement of *multiliteracies* which recognizes the “multiplicity of communications channels and media, and the increasing saliency of cultural and linguistic diversity” (p. 63) that “differ according to culture and context, and have specific cognitive, cultural, and social effects” (p. 64). *Multiliteracies* takes into account the implications of increasing diversity at a local level and global connections: “Effective citizenship and productive work now require that we interact effectively using multiple languages, multiple Englishes, and communication patterns that more frequently cross cultural, community, and national boundaries” (NLG, 1996, p. 64).

Our public lives and civic spaces have dramatically shifted away from the monocultural, nationalistic old order of the 19th and 20th centuries when schooling was intended to standardize national language at the expense of dialect difference and immigrants and indigenous students were expected to be educated in the “‘proper’ language of the colonizer” (NLG, 1996, p. 68). In contrast, the 21st century is characterized by civic pluralism with ever growing cultural and linguistic diversity and global connectedness, requiring that schools impart new skills to enable students to negotiate myriad dialects, sociocultural words, literacies, and hybrid identities. NLG argued that non-dominant semiotics and literacy practices are important for all students to learn, including "mainstream" students, which in the context of debate could be read as non-dominant literacies being important for traditional debaters. At the same time, merely providing lip service to diversity is insufficient: "Only by dealing authentically with them can we create out of diversity and history a new, vigorous, and equitable public realm" (NLG, 1996, p. 69).

Social change abounds in working lives, public lives, and civic spaces. Our working lives are marked by post-Fordism, “fast capitalism,” the flattening of hierarchical control, and the demand for new languages from new technologies. The rise of neoliberalism and free market capitalism has diminished and eschewed the roles and responsibilities of the nation-state, creating a “new politics of difference;” where on the one hand governance is left to more localized control, including paramilitiary organizations, ethnonationalists, and gangs, and on the other hand there exists a rising role in the politics of culture and identity. Given the rapid nature of these changes, the NLG argued that both literacy educators and students need to play active roles in designing pedagogy and crafting social change—literacy educators and their students are designing social futures.

But what does this teaching and learning of literacies look like? Although the ways in which people conceptualize and make sense and use of literacy may be individual at times, for the most part literacy is a social practice. Consequently, Barton and Hamilton (2005) outlined a social theory of literacy based upon five propositions. They employed two key terms: *literacy practices* and *literacy events*. *Literacy practices* are “the general cultural ways of utilizing written language which people draw upon in their lives” (p. 7). Literacy practices are relational and cultural ways of utilizing literacy.

> However practices are not observable units of behavior since they also involve values, attitudes, feelings and social relationship (see Street 1993, p. 12). This includes people’s

> awareness of literacy, constructions of literacy and discourses of literacy, how people talk about and make sense of literacy. These are processes internal to the individual; at the same time, practices are the social processes which connect people with one another, and they include shared cognitions represented in ideologies and social identities. Practices are shaped by social rules which regulate the use and distribution of texts, prescribing who may produce and have access to them." (Barton & Hamilton, 2005, pp. 7-8)

Literacy events are socially situated activities arising from and shaped by literacy practices. Usually centered around the production and/or interaction around written texts, the types of literacy events range from those that occur routinely in structured contexts, like those of formal institutions including schools, to those that are structured informally at home or within peer groups. Texts in literacy events include those that appear day-to-day, those of personal nature, and those that are mass-produced. The way these texts are used and situated in social practices is through literacy events that include a mixture of oral language, written texts, and multimodal texts representing a range of semiotic systems. "These three components, practices, events and texts, provide the first proposition of a social theory of literacy, that: *literacy is best understood as a set of social practices, these are observable in events which are mediated by written texts*" (Barton & Hamilton, 2005, p. 9).

Given the contextual nature of literacy events, they are not simply situated around print literacy, or one type of literacy, but myriad literacies. In a digital and globalizing world, the term *literacies* is more appropriate to reflect the many semiotic systems of communication from film to countless forms of multimodal and digital texts. Therefore a second component of Barton and Hamilton's (2005) social theory of literacy is that there are *"different domains of life"* (p. 11) that structure literacy practices and the varying ways that literacy is used and learned in different *discourse communities* (p. 11). Although these domains and discourse communities differ, and some have unique characteristics, they are not by nature necessarily discrete and static, but are dynamic and frequently overlapping and co-constituting.

At the same time, some institutions are more powerful than others and can limit the range of literacy activities. Thus, a third component Barton and Hamilton (2005) presented is that "*Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relationships, and some literacies are more dominant, visible and influential than others*" (p.12). Here, Barton and Hamilton make a distinction between dominant literacies and vernacular literacies. Vernacular literacies are more numerous, as they are localized and used in everyday life. They are also less visible and less influential given how powerful institutions privilege dominant literacy practices, which are "part of whole discourse formations, institutionalized configurations of power and knowledge which are embodied in social relationships" (Barton & Hamilton, 2005, p. 12).

The fourth component Barton and Hamilton (2005) provided is that "*literacy practices are purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices*" (p. 12); typically literacy is a means to an end. Barton and Hamilton use the example of cooking, where reading a recipe would be the means to create a dish, which could then be used to feed one's family. Thus, this particular literacy practice is embedded in larger social assumptions about care giving. Literacy is multifunctional. For instance, one may write for pleasure, to persuade, to inform, to remember, to memorialize, to communicate, and to serve a wide variety of individual and social purposes. Contrary to dominant conceptions of literacy as contained within the individual, Barton and Hamilton emphasize how groups of people use literacy such that literacy can be understood as a "community resource, realized in social relationships rather than property of individuals" (p. 13).

As many other NLS and sociocultural theorists have emphasized, literacy is not static, it is culturally and socially constructed to serve different purposes at different times; "*Literacy is historically situated*" (p. 13)—therefore we "need a historical approach for understanding of the ideology, culture and traditions on which current practices are based" (Barton & Hamilton, 2005, p. 13). Relatedly, theories of literacy also inform and are informed by a theories of learning because "*Literacy practices change and new ones are frequently acquired through processes of informal learning and sense making* as well as formal education and training" (p. 14)

Given the dynamic, historical, and socioculturally situated nature of literacies, theories of literacy and learning cannot be divorced from the dynamic interplay of identities. Arnetha F. Ball and Pamela Ellis (2008) drew upon James Gee's work to help articulate that differential achievement in academic writing are inexorably woven into the way in which students identify as writers, which is informed by teaching practices and learning environments. Consequently Ball and Ellis sought to interrogate the correlation between identity and student "achievement gaps" through a review of research in conjunction with an assessment of their own studies, out of which they attempted to answer: "Can we do a better job supporting and affirming students' identities of themselves as writers and whether affirmations lead to improved writing for students from diverse backgrounds?" (p. 499).

Ball and Ellis (2008) parsed their article into a review of research on identity formation, the forging and contestation of identities within classrooms, the connection between writing and identity, the ways in which students' identities as writers are and can be constructed, and how teaching writing in culturally diverse classrooms needs to be adjusted to account for this empirical research. Despite some claims that identity is static and pre-structured/constructed, most contemporary research agrees "that identities are negotiated through social relations and that identity is not merely an intrinsic quality" (Ball & Ellis, 2008, p. 500); and, "according to Noguera [2003], students generally achieve greater academic success when schools support and affirm their racial and cultural identities" (Ball & Elllis, 2008, p. 500).

With respect to Noguera's claim, Ball and Ellis (2008) leaned on Gee's (2001) work, who argues that identities are in a state of flux and being co-constituted through: nature, institutions, discourse, and affinities. A common phrase, "It's in her nature," would suggest that her actions are dictated by her identity that is internally and independently constructed, uninfluenced by institutions, discourses, and affinities. In contrast, an institutional perspective sees identity "as ascribed through authorization from an institution" (Ball & Ellis, 2008, p. 501). Similarly, "A discourse identity is an ascription that others give to an individual based on the way they talk and interact with that individual" (p. 501). The way in which a student interacts with their peers, teachers, and institutional staff helps to shape their identity. An identity crafted vis-á-vis one's affiliations focuses "on the practices that take place and on the identities they foster. From an affinity perspective, taking on an identity as a writer requires that students have access to and participate in writing activities" (p. 501). Ball and Ellis remind us that this participation in writing activities does not have to be confined within the walls of the school, or even within the walls of the classroom, or other traditional academic settings. The problem is the disregard for many of these out-of-school literacy practices, like our students' prolific reading and writing in digital spaces in the 21st century. By engaging with the latter two influences on identity, we can develop a more textured understanding of the "important role that positive, constructive, and affirming interactions play in the shaping of students' identity development in classroom settings" (Ball & Ellis, 2008, p. 501-2). To be sure, the proposed solution is not to prefer a non-dominant discourse over another, but rather to provide students with working "identity kits" (Gee, 1989) to enable students to be powerfully present and literate within, between, and in combining Discourses, which entails fostering an understanding of the unique identity kit of any given Discourse "including the words, syntax, and social characteristics that accompany that discourse" (Ball & Ellis, 2008, p. 502).

In the age of new media and cultural and linguistic plurality, these Discourses are continually expanding along with the many multimodal platforms available for consuming, producing and disseminating texts, ideas, identities, and ideologies. What this means for literacy research and praxis is the persistent need to update our understanding of the many types of languages, literacies, and rhetorics being engaged, learned, sidelined, silenced, and used inside and outside of formal schooling. When we expand the scope of what "counts" as literacy, we are able to document powerful literacy practices in spaces we might have traditionally overlooked. In their review of empirical research from ethnography in communication, activity theory, and New Literacy Studies, Glenda Hull and Katherine Schultz (2002) emphasized the critical importance of understanding the relationship between in-school learning and students' lives outside of school because the myriad out-of-school literacies "the abundant, diverse forms of out-of-school literacy-crossing class, race, gender, culture, and nationality-certainly enrich our definitions of literacy" (p. 44). Thus, some critical questions are: How might teachers leverage students' out-of-school identities, social practices and literacies? What are the resources that youth from diverse linguistic and social locations bring to the classroom? "How might teachers incorporate students' out-of-school interests and predilections but also extend the range of the literacies with which they are conversant" (Hull & Schultz, 2002, p. 36)? How might we adjust our thinking about curriculum and teaching and learning to care for students from nondominant Discourses? And, "How, to ask the hardest question, do we keep youth involved in school when their adult lives seem to hold little promise of work or civic activity or personal fulfillment that draws strongly on school-based literacy (Hull & Schultz, 2002, p. 36)?"

To anchor these questions in my research, I reviewed a broad but focused spectrum of theory and research in African American literacies and rhetoric(s), English language arts, sociocultural theory, and new literacies, to establish a framework and context for studying the various factors mediating students' literacies and linguistic and rhetorical practices in debate and the ways in which young people are developing and using 21st century literacies, Hip-Hop, and African and Greek rhetorics, to produce and make meaning with texts. Critical education theories provide the final frame to understand how students are using language and literacies to produce and communicate new knowledge in order to transform sociocultural and political conditions in competitive academic high school policy debate and in the larger society.

Critical Education Theories

The critical education theories that follows are informed by a robust tradition of scholarship in critical theory including the neo-Marxist cultural criticism of the Frankfurt School (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1944/1977; Benjamin, 1969; Habermas, 1989); neo-Marxist critiques of ideology and education (Gramsci, 1971; Louis Althusser, 1986); media and cultural studies of popular culture (Hall, 1973; Williams, 1977; Hebdige, 1979); Foucauldian critiques of subjectivity, power, and knowledge (Foucault, 1977); anticolonialism (Fanon, 1963/2004; Gayatari Spivak; Edward Said); and feminist perspectives (Luke, 1994; hooks, 2000; Collins

2009). The essential difference between making meaning within a theoretical framework versus a critical theoretical framework is that the former does not by definition critique the existing socio-political, cultural, and economic order and its attendant institutional structures, social relations, and material conditions. Alternatively, critical theorists are interested in understanding how that existing social order came into existence, how it operates structurally and dynamically, how it produces and reproduces the material conditions of inequality and oppression, and most importantly, how it can be transformed.

Critical education theorists recognize that education is not politically neutral: education introduces, prepares, and sanctions ways of knowing and navigating the world and as such it can produce, reproduce, and/or resist inequalities. As education is a site for mediating social, economic and political life, it can function as "sorting mechanisms in which select groups of students are favored on the basis of race, class, and gender; and as agencies for self and social empowerment" (McLaren, 2003, p. 186). Thus critical questions might be around whose history, language, culture, ideology, values, and ways of behaving are introduced and sanctioned as objective givens, immune from debate? What/whose versions of reality are passed off as "normal"? What/who is excluded?

With these questions in mind, critical educational theorists are interested in developing critical and active citizens armed with the courage and tools to transform institutions and systems, unequal power relations, and unjust social, cultural and political configurations in order to create more just, equitable and sustainable communities, societies, and nations. They see schools as sites that produce and reproduce social and economic inequalities, *as well as* possible sites of resistance and critical consciousness in which individuals develop a sense of self in an interconnected and dynamic world in which language and literacies can be used to expose, challenge, and precipitate change in inequalities around race, ethnicity, class, gender, gender identity, citizenship, religion, geographies, abilities, and so forth. Thus, a two-fold goal of critical educational theories is self-empowerment and social transformation through critical pedagogy and critical literacy.

Critical literacy. Critical literacy theorists and practitioners share notable similarities with sociocultural and new literacy theorists who acknowledge that literacy practices are ideological (de Castle & Luke, 1983/1988; Gee, 1989; Street, 1995), socially situated (Heath, 1983; Lave, 1996; Barton & Hamilton, 2005), and dynamic because people actively learn and use myriad linguistic and multimodal literacies to suit the needs of their daily lives and the changes in public and private spheres (New London Group, 1996; Gee, 2000). Critical literacy theorists would agree that literacies cannot be understood by limiting their study to acts of reading and writing, or simply encoding and decoding. Critical literacy is more than mastering the alphabet, it takes into account the myriad types of texts and literacy practices that reflect how people make sense of their worlds on their own terms. And although critical literacy scholars would agree with the importance of building upon students' funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzales, 1992) in literacy education, critical literacy instruction also seeks to teach students to analyze and deconstruct the relationship between power, knowledge, ideology and oppression, not just for the sake of deconstruction (Derrida, 1967), but for transforming those very structures for emancipatory ends (Freire, 1970; Lankshear & McLaren, 1993; Morrell, 2008). As Morrell (2007) wrote, education can build upon and extend community-based literacies and sociocultural language and literacy practices to develop academic literacies, civic engagement, and empowered identities grounded in a global sense of educational and social justice:

> By honoring and drawing upon local literacy practices and the everyday culture of youth, educators can prepare curricula that simultaneously increase academic literacies while also reaching into the worlds of students, facilitating empowered identities among these students, and making connections between their local practices and global concepts of educational and social justices (p. 235).

Whether operating from a cultural studies, critical race, or Black feminist epistemology, critical literacies go beyond mere academics. In designing a “Feminist Pedagogy and Critical Media Literacy,” Carmen Luke (1994) detailed how from a critical feminist standpoint epistemology, learning can be seen as developing the numerous analytic and discursive tools to negotiate differences and identities; navigate different discourses; deconstruct, co-construct, re-construct, and creatively produce textual re-presentations of self and others; engage in critical analyses of larger sociocultural, political and economic realities; and recognize the relationship between power and knowledge, and the relationship between material inequalities and dominant ideologies and structures.

Finding solutions to problems within a critical literacy framework often involves learning how to navigate power in order to transform social, political, and economic systems, as opposed to working to find solutions that fit within the prevailing institutions and systems that benefit a select few while undermining the interests, histories, languages, literacies, and identities and lives of so many others. Toward this end of transformation is an awareness of the ways in which language and education are inexorably woven into the dynamics of power circulating socially, culturally, economically, and politically. As such, critical literacy teaching and learning aims to demystify and analyze the relationships between power and knowledge, and the historical, material and structural conditions of inequality and oppression, while fostering the skills that are necessary to transform those very structures and conditions under critique.

Additionally, there is a necessary reflexivity within critical literacy education, as critical knowledge, literacies, and theories are not sacrosanct but should also be evaluated and re-evaluated in order to see how they too are implicated in power relations and structures. As Lankshear and McLaren (1993) note, this is the presence of praxis:

> Praxis is a social or pedagogical process which enlists human efforts to understand the world more accurately in conjunction with the political will to transform social practices and relations in a way that resolves contradictions 'in the rationality and justice of social action and social institutions.'" (Lankshear and McLaren, 1993, p. 41)

Undoubtedly, Brazilian educator and scholar Paulo Freire is as foundational to critical literacy, as Sylvia Scribner and Michael Cole (1981) are to sociocultural theory. To Freire, literacy learning and teaching should be ethical, political, and cultural acts for personal liberation and social transformation. Instead of a banking model of literacy education in which the teacher transmits to students a set of discrete skills, like reading and writing, with the objective being to help integrate the student as passive subjects into an unquestioned given reality and social order, the condition of marginality and its transformation must be at the forefront of literacy education. Freire (1970/1988) wrote that "Alienated men (*sic*), they cannot overcome their dependency by 'incorporation' into the very structure responsible for their dependency. There is no other road to humanization—theirs as well as everyone else's—but authentic transformation of the dehumanizing structure" (p. 402). As illiteracy is a manifestation of systemic domination and subordination, literacy is not a matter of learning the ABCs, but is rather "a difficult apprenticeship in naming the world" (p. 402), a process of understanding and naming the structures and historical situations that have created the unequal social conditions that entrench illiteracy and inequalities.

Freire (1970/2003) asserted a theory of literacy, learning, and pedagogy, that replaces a banking model of teaching and learning with problem-posing education that "involves, above all, thought-language; that is, the possibility of the act of knowing through his *(sic)* praxis, by which man (*sic*) transforms reality" (p. 398). This praxis involves a recursive process of thinking, acting, and reflecting in the world with objectives based on values, reflection, and intentionality to act *upon* the world, which is predicated on the degree of one's awareness of historicity—the past and present sociocultural, economic, political factors at play in shaping dynamic social conditions, power relations, and false perceptions of reality that promote passivity among oppressed groups and obscure pathways to liberation and humanization. Yet Freire contended that the role of educators is not to "speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours. We must realize that their view of the world…reflects their *situation* in the world" (p. 96).

In his article, "The Adult Literacy Process as Cultural Action for Freedom and Education and Conscientização," originally published in the *Harvard Educational Review*, Freire describes problem-posing education and clarifies how education should be a cultural action for freedom and conscientization, or critical consciousness. To illustrate this, Freire considers two types of primers used to teach adult literacy: one predicated on a digestive, nutritionist, or banking view of teaching and learning, versus one that is co-generative, dialogical, liberating, and transformative. The distinguishing features between a poorly done primer and a well-done primer are the following. The former would use words that are determined by the instructor to be "digested" by the student (for future regurgitation), whereas the latter would use words that are contextualized and co-generated with the student to facilitate a dialogue that reflects the lived realities of the student. In the former primer, based on a "'digestive' concept of knowledge" (p. 400), the student's consciousness is empty until "filled" by the instructor. Literacy is the food of knowledge and illiteracy is the poison (p. 400). Thus, the illiterate is the diseased subject needing treatment by the '"deposits of vocabulary'—the bread of the spirit which the illiterates are to 'eat' and 'digest'" (p. 400).

The digestive, or banking model, is also a "humanitarian" and missionary intervention: "If millions of men *(sic)* are illiterate, 'starving for letters,' 'thirsty for words,' the word must be *brought* to them to save them from 'hunger' and 'thirst'" (Freire, 1970/1988, p. 400). The humanitarian is required to "deposit" their food into the required area of starved subjects, not generate food *with* the people based upon the people's needs and historicities. The learning process is passive and the learner is objectified. And, learning in this mode is the saving grace, conferring salvation upon the learner—independent of any other significant social forces. Learn and you shall succeed. Pass a grade, a test, receive a diploma and you're good to go. Structural and historical realities shaping the conditions of inequality are inconsequential; thus

> Unable to grasp contemporary illiteracy as a typical manifestation of the 'culture of silence,' directly related to underdeveloped structures, this approach cannot offer an objective, critical response to the challenge of illiteracy. Merely teaching men (*sic*) to read and write does not work miracles; there are not enough jobs for men (*sic*) able to work, teaching more men (*sic*) to read and write will not create them." (p. 401).

Without a context and transformative applications of the language that people are to acquire, "they are not authentic representations of the world" (p. 401).

In the digestive/banking model of education, there is no faith in the student's ability to "know and even create the texts which would express their own thought-language at the level of their perception of the world" (p. 401). The students are marginal beings but without any explanation as to the structures affecting the conditions of marginality; thus, marginality can be blamed on the people themselves, as if it was their choice to live in poverty, homelessness, joblessness, sickness, crime etcetera, and not a result of any socio-cultural, economic, political, or historical realities. As Freire observed in terms of literacy:

> In fact, however, it is difficult to accept that 40% of Brazil's population, almost 90% of Haiti's, 60% of Bolivia's, about 40% of Peru's, more than 30% of Mexico's and Venezuela's, and about 70% of Guatemala's would have made the tragic *choice* of their own marginality as illiterates. If, then, marginality is not by choice, marginal man has been expelled from and kept outside of the social system and is therefore the object of violence...In fact, however the social structure as a whole does not 'expel,' nor is marginal man (*sic)* a 'being outside of.' He (*sic*) is, on the contrary, a 'being inside of,' within the social structure, and in a dependent relationship to those whom we call falsely autonomous beings, inauthentic beings-for-themselves (Freire, 1977/1988, pp. 401-2).

As a result of critical literacy instruction, the learner realizes the dynamic and permeable nature of culture, as shaped by time, social conditions, and individuals, and thus the learner repositions their ontological orientation and sees her/himself as an active Subject—a co-maker of meaning, culture, history, and social conditions through the mastery of letters. After a changing of former attitudes about oneself in the world, the learner can proceed with intention to master letters as a way to transform the world.

Similarly, Ernest Morrell (2007) argues that literacy educators have a responsibility to provide *greater* access, including "access to higher education, access to gainful and rewarding employment, and access to civic life" (p. 237). *However*, merely teaching these skills is not enough: "education cannot be solely concerned with access outside of a critique of the very system that we ask students to navigate. Sometimes, blind access can come at great costs, including the loss of self, or alienation from one's culture, one's language, and one's values" (p. 237). Thus, by adding onto sociocultural theories, educators who adopt a critical approach to teaching literacy can create learning environments where students do not have to abandon their culture, language, or values. And wherein

> students can acquire the skills they need to 'succeed' while also developing a powerful language of critique of systems of social reproduction...students can develop their literacies of access through a curriculum that is itself a proactive critique of inequitable power relations in society and the role that cultural production plays in legitimating these conditions (Morrell, 2007, p. 237).

Morrell (2008) documents how he created engaging educational contexts in which his students demonstrated their mastery over multiple literacies, reading across a wide-range of multimodal texts to develop critical research projects aimed at creating change their schools and communities. Not only did the young scholars develop academic literacies and a better understanding of the world around them, they also saw themselves as agents of change; the young critical researchers (Morrell, 2004) presented their research findings at conferences, school board meetings, and to politicians, and this programming still lives on today. Morrell and Duncan-Andrade's (2008) research also indicates the power of critical literacy to democratize access to the tools of research so students can advance a progressive social agenda by using research to implement substantive changes in their material and social realities. Literacy in these contexts is transformative—it means developing the knowledge and tools to make positive changes in the world.

Critically literate individuals know how to think, read, write, listen, question, speak, view, debate, and produce new knowledge critically, with purpose, for engaged citizenship, and in the interest of socially just change and personal emancipation. Developing critical literacies has transformative power: to read the word is not just to read the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987), it is also the ability to write oneself into the world, to shape the world.

Freire (1970/2003) insisted that this liberatory education must “take people’s historicity as their starting point” (p. 84) to explain why things are how they are and also how they could be different. In a critical literacy education, young people’s interests and cultures are the starting point for academic and civic engagement (Morrell, 2008; Morrell and Duncan-Andrade, 2008; Kinloch, 2010). Drawing from their lived experiences, students question what they know, what they read, hear and see, and how they position themselves in the world. However, to foster these outcomes, as teachers, we must awaken students’ authentic curiosity (Freire, 1998); and we, as teachers, must foster critical hope (Duncan-Andrade, 2009) in ourselves, in our students, and in future possibilities, for nihilism is a leisure that our children cannot afford. And we must honor what our students have to say, honor their funds of knowledge, honor their languages, honor how our students share what they are learning with us, and honor their dreams and critical visions for change. And as teachers we must also have courage to critically and reflexively see reflections of ourselves and changing times, and make the necessary adjustments in our own thinking and pedagogy. And lastly, as teachers we must have love. We sustain what we love.

In terms of the apprenticeship, one of the key goals was to embrace a “pedagogy of access and dissent” (Morrell, 2007/2008) that arms students with literacies of access and liberation. Additionally, as recent high school graduates, many of the debate educators were youths themselves given how they recently graduated from high school. They, as well as the rest of the faculty, were committed to strengthening students' academic literacies while also cultivating critically literate scholars in traditionally underserved communities. This orientation makes critical education theories indispensable for the framing of this research.

Chapter Three: Methodology

When I think of spending three hours with a group of students discussing the political nature of education, or the educational nature of politics, if I think that this is *not* researching, then I do not understand anything! That is, I am *reknowing* what I thought I knew, with students who are beginning to know about these issues.

- Paulo Freire, *A pedagogy for liberation: Dialogues in transforming education* (pp.8-9)

Introduction

As educators, learners and researchers we should be able to say: this is what we did; this is how we looked at our work; here is what we found; and these are the potential implications for teachers, students, schools, policy, and future research. We need to know if our work is living up to our own expectations, as well as those of our young scholars and leaders, teachers, community members and the broader society. And we should be able to identify and know how to document powerful (and perhaps not so powerful) moments in teaching and learning.

My critical ethnography (Carspecken, 1996; Foley and Valenzuela, 2005; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005) analyzes data over a three-year period to examine the role of debate in the development academic literacies, civic engagement, and the students' changing identities. To this end, I looked at how, to what extent, and to what ends participants developed and used their language and literacies academically and civically; how the young scholars leveraged oral language, multiple and multimodal literacies, language varieties, rhetorics, and critical literacies when researching, reading, writing, discussing and debating current events and social and political issues like hegemony, globalization, climate change, economics, and history, or philosophical issues like discourse, ideology, epistemology, ontology, power, and knowledge; and how this work informed how students saw themselves.

I drew on New Literacies Studies (Heath, 1983; Street 1993/2001; New London Group, 1996; Hull & Schultz, 2002; Street, 2003; Barton & Hamilton, 2005; Gee, 2015a) to inform the scope of my data collection and orient my data analysis. My data collection focused on a wide range of literacy practices in literacy events (Street, 2003; Barton & Hamilton, 2005) to answer my my research questions about the role of the debate apprenticeship in the development of students' academic literacies, civic engagement, and in fostering empowered identities. To answer this questions, some additional guiding questions in documenting literacy events were:

> **Academic literacies.** What might be the evidence of the various and evolving ways in which students use language and literacies (interpreted broadly in the spirit of NLS to include: oral, written, visual, digital, and multimodal, among others) within and across different literacy events to research, comprehend, summarize, synthesize, critique, discuss, debate, compose, and produce texts?
>
> **Civic engagement**. What might be evidence of students demonstrating conscientization (Freire, 1970), or critical consciousness, and civic mindedness whereby students feel they can—and indeed feel they have a responsibility to—speak with authority, speak truth to power, and act upon the world to change it?
>
> **Identities.** What is the role of the apprenticeship in the types of people the students are becoming? What new and evolving roles and responsibilities do they assume as they participate in the same community of practice? And as their participation changes in what ways do students talk about themselves and their cultures, languages, histories, literacies, and roles and responsibilities?
>
> **Implications.** And what are the potential implications for educators inside and outside of schools, school administrators, and education policy and future research?

Taking cues from Lave (1996), Freire (1970) and Morrell (2004 & 2008) about studying literacy practices as dynamic processes of individuals becoming different types of people, additional questions included: how, when, and to what degree a participant sees herself as a reader, writer, speaker, researcher, knowledge producer, and debater, and what do those identities entail for each individual? How do participants experience debate over time as they participate in the "movement[8]," or as "performance" or "Hip-Hop" debaters at local, regional, and national tournaments? And consequently, what might I learn from what it means to "become a debater" to better understand the possibilities for the development of literacies of access and liberation in and out of schools?

In investigating these processes, I was also interested in adding onto a body of knowledge on powerful teaching practices in English language arts and literacy education in public schools, especially secondary schools, to improve college readiness and resilience, strengthen civic mindedness, and foster powerful readers, writers, thinkers, speakers and leaders who have justified confidence in their literacies, languages, and cultural wealth and a sense of responsibility and ability to inform and govern a just, sustainable, vibrant and participatory democracy.

Critical Ethnography

My use of critical ethnographic research was informed by the sociocultural and critical theories I outlined in my review of the literature in chapter two. There are several assumptions inherent in a critical approach to ethnographic research. Education is not politically neutral (Apple, 1990) and neither is research (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Foley & Valenzuela, 2005; Angrosino, 2005). All research is informed by thought which is shaped by ideology (Street, 1993; Gee, 2000), power (Foucault, 1977; Fairclough, 2001), subjectivity (Freire, 1970; Luke, 1994; Butler, 1997), the processes of colonization (Smith, 2012; Darder, 2013), and sociocultural and historical contexts (Scribner and Cole, 1988; Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzales, 1992).

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[8] To be sure, as indicated in chapter one and chapter four, "the movement" refers to the dedicated efforts among debaters, coaches and judges, (most of whom are Black and Brown) to call out and challenge anti-Blackness in debate. These teams and coaches are often lumped together under the umbrella of "performance debate," or "the resistance," neither of which inherently critique or combat anti-Blackness.

In their article, *Rethinking Critical Theory and Qualitative Research,* Joe L. Kincheloe and Peter McLaren (2005) provided a useful definition of this criticality:

> We are defining a criticalist as a researcher or theorist who attempts to use her or his work as a form of social or cultural criticism and who accepts certain basic assumptions: that all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are social and historically constituted; that facts can never be isolated from the domain of values or removed from some form of ideological inscription; that the relationship between concept and object and between signifier and signified is never stable or fixed and is often mediated by the social relations of capitalist production and consumption; that language is central to the formation of subjectivity (conscious and unconscious awareness); that certain groups in any society and particular societies are privileged over others and, although the reasons for this privileging may vary widely, the oppression that characterizes contemporary societies is most forcefully reproduced when subordinates accept their social status as natural, necessary, or inevitable; that oppression by the many faces and that focusing on only one at the expense of others (e.g., class oppression versus racism) often elides the interconnections among them; and, finally, that mainstream research practices are generally, although most often unwillingly, implicated in the reproduction of systems of class, race, and gender oppression. (p. 304)

Critical ethnographic research in literacy and education has a strong foundation in existing scholarship (Freire, 1970; Fine, 1991; Lee, 1995; Carspecken, 1996; Barton & Hamilton, 1998/2012; Morrell, 2004; Morrell, 2008). Carol Lee (1995), for example, documented a critical research intervention in two American high schools. Through creating and researching culturally-based cognitive apprenticeships, Lee refuted deficit models of student achievement and gaps in literacy acquisition and literacy instruction by studying her pilot curriculum in which she used ethnically diverse literature and explicit reading comprehension strategies to build upon students' linguistic and cultural knowledge of signifying to scaffold literary instruction. Subsequently, she publically troubled the assumptions about her students' lack of linguistic wealth, intelligence and academic capabilities, and offered suggestions for transforming educational practice to correct certain injustices.

In critical ethnographic research, centering young people's voices and experiences is not just a way to answer pressing research inquiries, but is also a way to involve young people in the problematizing of issues that directly concern them so that our youth have opportunities to research, explore, construct, and execute plans to ameliorate problems in the service of community well-being, social justice, and educational equity (McIntyre, 2000; Morrell, 2004; Fine, Burns, Payne & Torre, 2004; Mirra, Garcia & Morrell, 2015).Yet this supporting of young critical researchers requires attending to the environment in which they are learning.

In their article about critical literacy research, Burns and Morrell (2005) argued that any education researcher concerned with addressing the stratification of literacy along lines of race and class must attend to the way in which classroom discourse can produce and reproduce inequalities in education. By examining critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a pedagogical tool in a teacher education program, as the analysis of critical discourse among urban youth in a summer research project who were being apprenticed as critical researchers of urban and educational injustice, and by employing CDA to facilitate critical language awareness among urban youth and to analyze artifacts that coalesce to construct fields of discipline like English education, Burns and Morrell evidenced why literacy researchers should consider leveraging CDA as a resource for researching the assumptions and ideological orientations of texts and discourse communities in order to evaluate truth claims and socially constructed boundaries demarcating the borders around what constitutes "official" knowledge, histories, epistemologies, cultures, and phenomena worthy of study and development, in order to strengthen teaching and learning in the service of equity and educational justice.

My critical ethnographic research was concerned with investigating and documenting students' various language and literacy practices as they change over time in their reference to power and issues of social justice, in their use of academic language and literacies, and in reference to themselves and their peers as readers, writers, thinkers, speakers, and civic actors and leaders. This analysis of language and literacies goes beyond monocultural and monolingual conceptions of English and literacies that constrain and restrict academic and civic discourse by over-limiting which language and literacy practices "count" or are valued (Graff, 1982/1988; Street, 1995; Street 2003), in order to expand academic discourse to make room for the development and application of languages and literacies that are often overshadowed by dominant literacies (Barton & Hamilton, 1998/2012; Fisher, 2003), Dominant American English (Paris, 2012; Young, Barrett, Young-Rivera, & Lovejoy, 2015), or by studies that merely focus on literacies acquired through formal schooling (Hull & Schultz, 2002). In addition, this critical ethnography was interested in working with research participants to serve the needs of the participants and their communities in the interest of addressing social (in)justices (Giroux & McLaren, 1989; Fine, 1994; Foley & Valenzuela, 2005; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005).

Selection and Description of Focal Research Participants

In addition to documenting the language and literacy practices being developed and applied in the ILDI debate apprenticeship in the summer of 2012, based on convenience and accessibility (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) my research followed four ILDI debaters (Table 1) from 2012 through their high school graduation in 2014 and into their first year of college. I first started working with the four debaters in 2011 during after school meetings at the Ivy League university. Out of all of the ILDI debaters, two I coached on a weekly basis, and all four were the most actively engaged in competitive academic policy debate at a national level, which meant that I had more opportunities to observe their language and literacy practices over time.

Terrance and Shakiya, two of the core participants, attended Crow Hill High School. Crow Hill High School is a Title 1 public school located in a predominantly Caribbean district of a borough with a population of a little over 2.5 million. In 2011, out of the 20,656 residents of the community district Crow Hill, 70 percent were Black, 15 percent were Latin@, nine percent were White, two percent were Asian, and four percent were classified as "other." In 2011-2012, the student population at the school was 85 percent Black, 12 percent Latin@, one percent Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and one percent White. 79 percent of the students were eligible for free lunch and eight percent were eligible for reduced price lunch.

The other two core participants, Mickey and John, began debating at the Tremont School in seventh grade, although Mickey's mom transferred him to a Greek Orthodox parochial school in his nineth grade year. Tremont School is a Title 1 public school serving students in grades seven through twelve. In 2011-2012, 63 percent of the students at Tremont High School were eligible for free lunch, 13% were eligible for reduced price lunch, 30 percent of the students were Black, 66 percent were Latin@, two percent were Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and one percent were White. The school is located in a community district on the southwestern edge of the most northern borough of a large Northeastern city. The southern part of the borough has half a million residents; 39 percent are Black and 60 percent are Latin@. According to census data, in 2010 the southern part of the borough was ranked as the poorest district in the country, with over a quarter-million, or 38 percent of its residents living in poverty—although for children the poverty level was even more troubling at 49 percent. While the community district of the school is experiencing a new "revitalization" effort—aka gentrification—with a new sports stadium, new 11-story buildings (most of which are not low-income units), chain stores, and city plans for rezoning with tax incentives for developers, all of which are causing rents to spike along with the corresponding growth in anxiety among residents and micro business owners concerned with their ability to continue to afford rent—the area still has a number of vacant lots, one of the largest public housing units in the borough, and many public schools reporting low test scores and concerns around safety.

Table 1
Description of Focal Participants

Name	Ethnic Identity	Languages Spoken	Neighborhood	Socioeconomic Background
John Ortiz	1st Generation Dominican	Spanish (1st language) English	Southwest district of North Borough	Low-income
Mickey	½ Greek, ½ Puerto Rican	English	East Borough	Low-income
Terrance	Panamanian, Black	English Spanish Patois	South Borough	Low-income
Shakiya	Jamaican, Black	English	South Borough	Low-income

Table 1. Description of Focal Participants

John Ortiz

John Ortiz was a first generation Dominican male who lived in an apartment with his mother in the northern borough. John started debating in seventh grade at the same Title 1 school that he attended until he graduated from high school and matriculated into college. In high school he debated with Mickey during both of their junior and senior years. John was the type of person who had an incredible capacity for being even-keeled and keeping his cool in the most difficult of situations. He was upbeat and humble, easy-going with mad swagger, and he was always real. He had serious Dominican pride and he loved his girlfriend, loved debating, and he loved Rashad Evans (so did Mickey). John would tell it how it was, but the odds were that he'd likely throw in a charming smile at some point while he was doing it. In my subjective opinion, John had a great sense of humor—the young man had jokes. During the first couple of years of knowing him, whenever we were at the same tournament, without a doubt I could guarantee that at some point I would hear him walking down the hallways of the tournament chanting: "When White people say *justice* they mean *just us,*" just loudly enough to make sure that a sizeable number of people within earshot could hear his one-man protest of White supremacy in debate. To be sure, as indicated by his explanations in his debate rounds on the subject of White supremacy, John recognized it as a sociopolitical and ideological construct, not as something that was indicative of the color of someone's skin. John planned to be a lawyer as he was tirelessly committed to speaking truth to power and working to eradicate injustice at its roots while being practical in acknowledging that while dealing with some of the most stubborn of roots, sometimes the branches must be pruned in the meantime.

Mickey

Mickey identified as a Greek Boricua (half Greek and half Puerto Rican), however he was disappointed that he did not grow up learning Spanish. Mickey lived with his mom and stepfather in an apartment in Queens. He attended the Tremont School for seventh and eighth grade, but concerned about him getting the best education possible, his mom sent him to a private Greek Orthodox school in an eastern borough for high school. Since Mickey's high school did not have a debate team, he continued to debate under the title of the Tremont School. Mickey loved Lebron James, the Miami Heat (well, certainly when Labron was with them), the

Giants, and the Yankees. Mickey was fiercely loyal and protective of his closest friends and family and he had the utmost pride for his family and his Puerto Rican roots such that he sportted a tattoo designed by his uncle that read *family* when viewed from one direction and *friends* when viewed from the other. He was a young man who believed “sarcasm is a body’s natural defense against stupidity” (personal communication, September 19, 2011) and who at 15 said that watching the republican debates “makes me sooo vexed” (personal communication, January 26, 2012). Mickey had a wonderfully dry and sarcastic sense of humor and he was also one of the most serious young scholars and leaders I have met. And Mickey was multidimensional. During his last two years in high school, on any given day, his Facebook posts would range from sports commentary; links to Hip-Hop songs and music videos from Tupac, Biggie, and Nas to J-Cole, Immortal Technique, dead prez, and Kendrick Lamar; quotes from or background about revolutionary leaders like Malcolm X and Hatuey and organizations like the Young Lords; playing the dozens through meme wars with his friends; debate jokes; commentary about race and White privilege; photographs of something he was reading which could be something like a book by Jared Sexton on anti-Blackness; and links to articles or snapshots of newspaper articles about things like how the United States trained “anti-Soviet warrior,” Bin Laden about which Mickey wrote: “Guess who game him CIA training....”(Facebook post, September 11, 2012). When he was a sophomore in high school, Mickey wanted to attend Towson University where he planned to major in cultural studies with a minor in sociology and anthropology. By January he wanted to major in ethnic studies, around which time he posted a quote or two from Frank B. Wilderson III, which later turned into extremely long evidence-based and theoretically-grounded essays on race. In his junior year Mickey shifted his focus to law as he planned to be a lawyer.

Terrance

Terrance was a second generation Black Panamanian student who lived with his mom and sisters in an apartment on the outskirts of the southern borough. Terrance began debating his first semester of high school in 2010. He loved Hip-Hop, reggae, jazz, and rhythm and blues. He was an all around artist: a spoken word poet, a visual artist, enjoyed (and was pretty good at) digitally mixing and mashing up music. He had B-boy skills, which he first shared with us, somewhat hesitantly, during part two of the Dance Revolution workshop hosted by E-Lusion and Fatality during the 2012 summer workshop. While he was in high school, in addition to his love of art, Terrance equally expressed his love of cookies, except he had no problem tempering his urge to eat them if he was on one of his super-healthy stints. Terrance was an incredibly deeper thinker and one of the most disciplined and driven young scholars I have ever met—always striving to be the best at everything he does, so much so that coming in second place seemed to strike at the core of his being because he always felt that he could do better. While at times he could be described as reserved or melancholy on account of being such a contemplative young man, anyone who knew him well knew that he had a deep sense of compassion, love for others, and a commitment to justice. He was also a social entrepreneur and wanted to start his own non-profit to support other artists who are social entrepreneurs.

Shakiya

Shakiya was a second generation Black Jamaican student who lived in an apartment with her mom and younger sisters in the southern borough. Shakiya began debating her second year of high school in 2011 and started debating with Terrance in 2012 after Terrance's debate partner Jay had a life-threatening illness and was hospitalized for most of his junior year. Shakiya also had Sickle Cell and was in and out of hospitals throughout her high school years, which was also true of her first semester in college. While frequent hospitalizations might massively upset any regular person, Shakiya had reserves of strength. I was constantly amazed by how she was always on top of her game. She not only was able to juggle family responsibilities, a social life, high school and debate work, but she also thought to add college courses to the mix her senior year in high school—why not? Yet I was always worried Shakiya was going to quit debate; as Terrance can attest, she no doubt threatened to quit on multiple occasions. But being a woman alone in any male-dominated activity is not easy, yet for Shakiya, this was compounded by race and socioeconomics. Shakiya was a young Black woman from a Title 1 urban high school who frequently threatened to quit participating in what she and her peers saw as a White, hetero-patriarchal, male dominated activity. Suffice it to say, Shakiya had more than enough reasons to bounce. But she didn't quit because she couldn't bring herself to leave Terrance without a partner. Even when debate wasn't fun for her (which was most of the time until she became a senior), she nevertheless stuck with it on GP[9]; she had mad[10] heart and she wouldn't leave her loved ones hanging. Shakiya was also an incredible event coordinator; she was the backbone and the stage manager for the public debate, awards ceremony and public celebration at ILDI in the summer of 2012, the same summer that she was also a main organizer of her neighborhood's block party. She loved music. She loved owls. She loved purple. She loved Black feminism. While she had a resting face that others have unfairly told her makes her seem "mean," haters still know that her smile and laughter lit up a room and her brilliance was bioluminescence.

Data Collection

I examined data from a three-year period that documented a wide variety of literacy events (Heath, 1982/1988; Barton & Hamilton, 2004) in which literacy practices (Barton and

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[9] GP = general principle.

[10] By mad I mean "a lot of." Mad is to New York as "hecka" is to the Bay Area, as "mass" is to Seattle, as "hella" is to the West Coast, and somewhat how "wicked" is to Boston.

Hamilton, 2005) occur. I define literacy events as situations in which debaters are engaging with texts through research, discussion, writing, reading, debating and producing texts of their own. These literacy events occurred at after school meetings, debate tournaments (preparation before rounds, in debate rounds, and post-round reviews), public presentations, summer programming, and online correspondence. Additionally, considering that learning is an aspect of changing participation in changing practices (Lave, 1996, p. 161), in order to see these changes, I sought to "establish the location in which and the processes by which the most potent identity-constituting learning conjunctures occur" and then looked for the "foci of identity-changing activity" (Lave, 1996, p. 162).

Table 2
Data Collection Timetable

Time Period	Events	Length of Event	Data Collected
June – August 2012	ILDI Summer Institute	8 weeks	field notes (FN), researcher memos (RM), videos (V), online correspondence (OC), student work (SW)
September 2012 – May 2013	After School Meetings & Weekend Tournaments	3-hour weekly after school meetings and 7 weekend debate tournaments	FN, RM, V, OC, SW
Summer 2013	ILDI Summer Institute	2 weeks	FN, RM, V, OC, SW
September 2013-May 2014	After School Meetings & Weekend Tournaments	3-hour weekly after school meetings and 7 weekend debate tournaments	FN, RM, V, OC, SW
June 2014	ILDI Summer Institute	1 week	FN, RM, V, OC, SW
August 2014-June 2015	Semi-Structured Interviews	~90 minutes with each scholar (John, Shakiya, & Terrance)	semi-structured interviews

Table 2. Data Collection Timetable

I utilized a variety of qualitative data collection methods for validity (Maxwell, 2012): field notes and researcher memos, debater-generated writing samples, online correspondence, video documentation, and semi-structured interviews (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Every year, beginning in September, I coached Shakiya and Terrance every Thursday for three hours. I also was with the four core participants at the university during the summer and at weekend debate tournaments, with each tournament being at least eight hours long. During these classes and tournaments, I took extensive field notes which were typed after each session. At the request of the students and teachers, I also videotaped debate rounds and parts of practices. The main purpose of these videos was to assist the debaters in making improvements, but I also used these videos as additional data as the videos span several years, which enabled me to see the changes in students' literacies and language use over time. These videos also provided insight into students' motivation for learning as they discussing their reasons for debating and the significance of their various modes of argumentation and forms of presentation. At meetings, tournaments, and through email and Facebook, students shared with me written documents including their speeches, poetry, raps, articles they read, and judges' ballots from tournaments.

Field notes and researcher memos. During literacy events, I took extensive field notes when students engaged with texts through reading, analyzing, discussing, critiquing, writing, and debating. I documented how students were using language and academic, new, and critical literacies in reference to social, political, historical, economic, and cultural issues, empirical research, theories, as well as in reference to themselves and their peers. When taking field notes interfered with the activity at hand, as it often can when teaching and coaching, I waited until I was alone and recreated the event in my journal with as much detail as possible.

Video recordings. Whenever possible, I videotaped meetings and tournament rounds. These recordings were used for educational purposes for the students to review their progress, and to document the changing ways in which students used their language and literacy practices to achieve different effects over time and in different situations. I looked at how students were using language and literacies to discuss, explain, and debate social, economic, political, and cultural issues, empirical research, and theories. I also looked at how the debaters used language and literacies in reference to themselves and their peers.

Online correspondence. As much coaching occurred online vis-à-vis social networking sites and email, I looked at this correspondence from 2012-2015 to provide additional insights into students' evolving language and literacy practices. I looked at how students were using language and literacies to discuss, explain, and debate social, economic, political, and cultural issues, empirical research, and theories. I also looked at how the debaters used language and literacies in reference to themselves and their peers.

Student work. I collected individual writing from students' debate cases, speeches from tournaments, essays to college, and students' research notes. These productions provided a way to trace the changes over time in the students' use of language and literacies, as well as the roles and responsibilities that they were taking up in their compositions and in the same community of practice. The debate cases and speeches composed in written text coupled with their oral form captured on video, also added an extra layer of texture for data analysis.

Interviews. Semi-structured interviews (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) surveyed students about class lessons, curricula and tournament experiences, and encouraged student reflections on the role of debate in their academics and college-going practices and experiences, civic engagement, and how they saw their roles and responsibilities evolve over time in the same community of practice. My interview protocol was informed by James Spradley's (1979) use of interviews in qualitative research and also by my review of literature on debate, literacies, and rhetorics. While I had intended to interview all four students after they graduated from high school, I only interviewed three because Mickey was unavailable due to academic and civic obligations. After permission from participants, all interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Before each interview I explained the purpose of the research and verified if it was okay to record the interview. I informed students that I would be the only person listening to the audio, but I told them to let me know if they wanted me to turn off the recorder at any time and I would oblige. Particularly relevant to this study, I asked the debaters about their first exposure to debate and their experiences with traditional debate including their observations and feelings around the norms and topics, reasons for using Hip-Hop and poetry in debate, inspirations for their compositions, and experiences in debate. I was interested in hearing from the debaters about how they saw the role of the apprenticeship in their academic literacies and civic engagement. I juxtaposed these interviews with the rest of the data I collected to develop a more comprehensive picture of the role of debate in the students' academic literacies, civic engagement, and the different roles the students assumed over time in debate.

As I collected data, I organized it over time, activity settings, and for each participant. For example, each summer institute had its own folder, as did each academic year: 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015. Each academic year had subfolders for meetings, debate tournaments, student work, online correspondence, and participants. Each participant also had their own folder, which had subfolders for summer institutes, and each academic year, which also had subfolders for meetings, debate tournaments, student work, online correspondence.

Data Analysis

As the goal of my data analysis was to determine the role of debate in the students' development of academic literacies, civic engagement, and identities, instead of looking at literacy events in terms of students learning and applying a discrete set of languages and literacies, I looked at this learning as a socially situated practice in which young scholars were becoming different types of people as they changed in their ways of using language and literacies academically, socially, and civically (Lave, 1996; Freire, 1970). I also looked to New Literacies Studies for an expanded conception of literacies.

My categories for analysis were informed by research on debate, critical and new literacies, sociocultural theories of language and learning, African American rhetoric(s) and language, and English language arts. Some categories of data analysis included students researching, discussing, debating, analyzing, clarifying, summarizing, synthesizing, critiquing, teaching, and producing. In analyzing all data—field notes and researcher memos, video recordings, student work, online correspondence, semi-structured interviews—I looked at the changes over time in the students' use of language and academic, new and critical literacies in researching, discussing, analyzing, constructing arguments, and debating social, political, historical and cultural issues, and in reference to social and critical theories, and in reference to themselves and their peers. To this end, I coded data across activity settings (school, ILDI meetings and summer programming, and debate tournaments), across time periods, and over time for each participant. I noted when debaters talked about being a scholar, leader, debater, knowledge producer, writer, and reader. I took note of recurring words, varying uses of languages and rhetorics, and literacies that emerged from student-produced debate artifacts, online correspondence, video recordings of debate practices and tournaments, and interviews. I also looked at the similarities and differences between participants' stories, artifacts, and my review of the literature to find emergent themes that tied the data together. I wanted to understand the debaters' experiences in debate and the way their thinking about academics, literacies, language use, themselves, and the world changed, or did not changed, during the study. I grouped together data that relates to different types of academic and critical literacies (speaking, listening, reading, writing, questioning, synthesizing, critical thinking, and referencing domain-specific knowledge), civic participation (critical consciousness), and identity formation (sense of self-in-the-world, debate identity, scholarly identity, civic identity). Lastly, I looked for the most prominent patterns across all of the groupings and dominant themes that emerged with respect to each research question.

This analysis required remembering the contributions from sociocultural and critical literacies that argue that no education is politically neutral or absent some ideology that informs ways of acting, relating, and being in the world, or personal, social, organizational, and institutional identities. The antagonistic sociocultural and political history of competitive academic policy debate, including the inequalities in access along racial and class lines and the dominance of certain discursive procedures, can be better understood by examining the ideology and discourse of debate in a *critical* way: recognizing that inequalities in debate are 'wrongs' that need to be 'righted.' Thus, I employed critical ethnographic research to code the way in which students demonstrated their understanding of this interplay between language, power and ideology, and the students' corresponding motivation to instigate change.

In chapters four through six, I included extensive quotes from debaters and examples of student work in order to have them put the data—the debaters' experiences—in their own words, in order to provide a more substantive, accurate, and contextualized analysis derived from the students' observations, self-reflections and assessments. With this data, I tried to find similar and divergent themes, and highlight particular ones that spoke to those themes that reflected the most comprehensive picture of the whole.

Role of the Researcher

As a researcher always has a social location from which they conduct their inquiry, Peshkin (1988) advised that a researcher should actively seek out their subjectivity to reduce their bias from interfering with the study. As the students' coach as well as a researcher, I was undeniably—and unapologetically—close with the research participants. In many ways we functioned as an extended family. As one of the debaters noted, we are "that second family that you have away from home." We shared in each other's celebrations and losses and we were there for each other inside and outside of school and debate. I see my own proximity and investment in the lives of the debaters as an asset that conferred a level of trust and intimacy that afforded deeper insight into the lives of the young leaders that an outsider could not access (Denzin, 1997).

In addition to my relationship with the research participants, in analyzing and reporting my data, I also took into consideration my social location. I was a high school and college debater and director of two Urban Debate Leagues. I am the daughter of two loving parents, a very gifted artist (my dad, Mark Johnson) and high-risk perinatal registered nurse (my mom, Therese Johnson, who is thankfully now finally retired!). I have one younger brother, Devin Johnson, who is an incredibly talented and skilled digital and graphic design artist. I grew up with four grandparents in my life: Don and Helen Johnson, loving parents of Kathy, my aunt, and my dad; and Jim and Beverly Kelly, two very Irish Catholic and proud parents of five children (one being my mom). I was raised in Seattle and attended Catholic school until I was 10 when my parents moved us to a politically progressive hippy-island off of Seattle, Washington, where I was introduced to Hip-Hop through dance when I was in elementary school, which is also when I led my fist sit-in (I would organize four before graduating from high school). Although I started taking college courses at Seattle Community College to earn high school and college credits when I was 16, I still debated for four years at Vashon High School (VHS), a small (at the time I was there we had around 400 students) high school located on an island in the

Puget Sound. Situated two miles off of West Seattle, accessible only by a ferry boat, Vashon is roughly the same size as the island of Manhattan in New York City, but with a population of about 10,000 people in the winter months. As a high school debater, I was what people would call a "K" debater, or critical debater; I loved critiquing the epistemological, ideological, and ontological assumptions of other debaters' arguments and language. I loved ecofeminism, deep ecology, Foucault, and critiques of ageism and normativity. VHS had a well-established debate program under the leadership of our esteemed coach, Jim Dorsey. Throughout my four years there, I was able to work with seasoned veterans who were graduates of the debate program, which coupled with being privileged to attend summer debate camps (Northwestern for four weeks in the summer when I was 15, Dartmouth for four weeks when I was 16 and 17, and also UC Berkeley for two weeks when I was 17), I became a highly successful nationally competitive high school policy debater, travelling up and down the West Coast competing at national tournaments (which is incidentally how I decided I wanted to go to college at UC Berkeley at the age of 14 because I attended a tournament hosted by the university). I was really good. And I was a rarity given that I was a young woman and there were very few of us in the activity. Yet being an anomaly was very challenging. I was told by many of my high school male colleagues that my success in debate was not due to my own merit but was rather because I was a "bitch" or a "slut"—God-forbid a woman actually wins because she is good. Yet I was very fortunate to have had four amazing female mentors who supported me as I navigated competitive academic high school policy debate as a young woman: Becky Galentine, who founded the Seattle Debate Foundation which ran the Seattle UDL, and who was one of my favorite judges to have when I was debating in high school; Judy Butler, who co-founded the Stanford Debate Institute and began mentoring me at the UC Berkeley camp when I was 17; Dr. Cheryl Burdette, who was my lab leader at the UC Berkeley camp when I was 17; and Kate Shuster, who was my lab leader at the Dartmouth Debate Institute (DDI) when I was 16. I realized the critical importance of having a group of brilliant (and super fun) mentors who could reflect and validate my experiences in debate; I drew strength from that community of strong women as I began to take action.

Hetero-patriarchy was so obvious in competitive high school policy debate such that when I was 17, I mobilized the handful of other young women attending DDI and led an institute-wide sit-in to protest gender discrimination and sexual harassment (which the director attended and listened to us with respect). That's how I first met Melissa Maxcy Wade, then Director of Debate at Emory University and founder of Urban Debate Leagues. I wrote a letter to her about the sit-in because she gave a talk while I was at Dartmouth on Urban Debate Leagues; I figured that since she was interested in issues of racial equity in debate, that she would care about what I had to say about what went down at DDI. She did—she subsequently read parts of my letter at instructor trainings around the country.

My success as a high school debater landed me a summer job teaching debate immediately upon high school graduation. That first summer I taught at a summer debate institute held at the University of Maryland, College Park. In the following five years, I also taught at debate institutes at Stanford University and UC Berkeley, as well as debate workshops in Hawaii.

I also debated for one year in college when I was an undergraduate at the University of California at Berkeley, which is also when I started working in urban education. In 1999 I began teaching competitive academic high school policy debate at a public school in the San Francisco-Bay Area that had been rated the second to the worst high school in California that year. My placement there coupled with my courses in ethnic studies at UC Berkeley, rendered obvious how painfully acute the racial and economic injustice was in urban education. That determined my career path to enhance student opportunities in urban education.

As soon as I graduated from UC Berkeley, I began directing the Bay Area Urban Debate League. From 2001-2008, I directed UDLs, serving predominantly Black and Latin! youths in grades 4-12. The first location was working in four Bay Area school districts, the second was in Seattle and Tacoma, Washington where I drew upon my love of Hip-Hop and relationships with nationally renowned debaters, coaches, and Hip-Hop teaching artists to start the first Hip-Hop Debate institute in the country in 2006 at the University of Washington. After the initial cohort of Seattle urban debaters that I began working with when they were in seventh grade graduated from high school in Seattle, I moved to New York for graduate school, which is when I began coaching Team Rev—Devonte Escoffery, aka Fatality, aka Fatal, aka Fa-tayl, and Stephon Adams, aka The E-Lusion, aka DJ Slick—who made history as the first team from Brooklyn to make it to the Tournament of Champions. They were the ones that several debaters credit as being their inspiration for incorporating Hip-Hop into their debating.

My relationship debate and with the young people in this study makes it such that I have strong sense of obligation to treat the young leaders' stories and experiences with justice and care and reflect thoughtfully upon the way in which my research represents them and their languages and literacies.

To protect the confidentiality of the students and participants, I use pseudonyms for the school as well as the participants and anyone they reference. Even with these pseudonyms, Fine and Weis (1996) have argued that representation is not an easy task for the researcher concerned with social justice. Recognizing the way in which research can be used to inform societal conceptions of people, activities, and spaces, as well as policy and practice, a researcher must be careful about representing race, culture, and tensions in education in a way that does not entrench negative stereotypes or contribute to the further gutting of educational programming, but at the same time doesn't sanitize the research or erase the lived realities of the people involved in the research. With that in mind, the data and analysis I share about the debaters is nothing they have not publicized in their debate rounds. Since the debaters share detailed and extensive personal narratives in their debate rounds, I felt these combined with data from other sources, were enough to help provide a thick-description (Geertz, 2000); conversations that were more personal in nature, I chose to leave out.

To facilitate the interrogation of my subjectivities, I documented my personal observational field notes that took into account these predilections and relationships (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007) including my background as a justice-seeking White[11] woman of the Hip-Hop generation and a former debater and director of Urban Debate Leagues. I also utilized a variety of qualitative data collection methods for validity (Maxwell, 2009): participant observations, debater-generated writing samples, interviews and video documentation.

Lastly, I must stress that I am not just dealing with subjects as objects of research, but I am writing about my extended family, friends, colleagues, mentors, and students (many of which overlap). Given my intimate relationship with the individuals in this project, as well as my background, I can't front like I have an "objective" and detached research location (although it's questionable whether any research can truly claim objectivity.) However, I was not interested in generating uncritical support for debate, or Hip-Hop, or the debaters' language and literacy practices; rather I wanted to know what worked or did not work and why and how, because I was interested in examining the critical debate apprenticeship as an English educator committed to learning more about how best to support young scholars and leaders in the development of their academic literacies, civic engagement, and empowered identities, in the interest of supporting powerful Englishes in and outside of the formal schooling of young scholars and pre- and in-service teachers.

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[11] "White" is not how I identify. But because this is how I look, I use White to describe myself in recognition of how my appearance gives me unique privileges in a civil society built upon and sustained by anti-Blackness and White supremacy.

“Prep Time” Before Findings Chapters

Assuming that you, the reader, are reading this from beginning to end, this interlude is supposed to be your “prep time,” time to prepare for engaging with the findings chapters. As competitive academic high school policy debate has a specialized discourse, with a set of procedures and words and phrases that are unique to the activity, I outline some of them here. I also added footnotes throughout the findings chapters whenever features of that discourse appear.

Helpful Things to Know About Competitive Academic High School Policy Debate

There is a national high school policy debate topic, or *resolution*, that changes annually. This resolution focuses on either a domestic or foreign policy issue. Since 1977, the wording of all but one resolutions begin with: *“Resolved: The United States federal government should...”*, which is followed by a suggested action to take around a domestic or foreign policy issue.

Every debate round consists of two, two-person teams, the affirmative and the negative, and one or more judges in the back of the room taking notes (presumably) throughout the round and deciding on a victor at the end of the debate. Aside from perhaps keeping time and giving oral time signals to the debaters during the round, the is not supposed to jump in to moderate or do anything else that influences the game until after the eight speeches and four cross-examinations have concluded.

Generally (although this, like *everything else* in debate is debatable), the affirmative team is expected to present a debate case that reflects and/or defends the resolution in some way shape or form. The negative team is responsible for saying why the affirmative team’s plan, advocacy, or defense of the resolution is a bad thing and why no change, or an alternative change that is mutually exclusive with the affirmative’s and proposed by the negative team, is better than voting for the affirmative. Both teams can also present a priori procedural arguments by accusing their opponents of breaking "the rules" (there really are no rules, just general stylistic norms and procedures) of debate in some way, destroying competitive equity, which necessitates that the team in violation lose the debate round. So, unlike how procedural issues result in penalties, *not losses*, in various competitive athletic sports, like when one team has "too many men" on the field or playing area than is permitted by the rules, in debate, one team can make a procedural argument and argue that their opponents lose the round for this violation.

At any given weekend debate tournament, there are preliminary rounds and then elimination rounds. There are typically five to six preliminary rounds. Depending on the tournament the number of teams participating in any given division[12], generally the top 32 (64 at only a handful of tournaments) or 16 teams will advance to elimination rounds. If 32 teams advance, they compete in the double octo-final round. If 16 teams advance, they begin the elimination rounds competing in the octo-finals. The winning teams of the octo-finals will advance to quarterfinals. This continues until only the final two teams remain who compete in the finals for the championship title.

Structure of a Debate Round

There are eight speeches in each debate round (Table 3). Each one of the four debaters in the round delivers two speeches. Four of those eight speeches are called "constructive" speeches, where the teams are constructing their arguments. Each constructive speech is eight minutes long and after each one, there is a three-minute cross-examination. After the four constructive speeches (and the four cross-examinations), there are the four rebuttal speeches where teams are further developing and responding to the arguments that have been presented in the four constructive speeches. Each rebuttal speech is five-minutes long. Typically each team gets a total of eight to ten minutes of preparation time to use over the course of the round. Teams take their “prep time” before and/or after speeches and/or cross-examinations. At the end of the debate round, the judge(s) deliberates (individually if there is a panel of judges) and determines the winning team (this can be very subjective, although most judges would like to think that they are transparent about their criteria for judging which they post online at judge philosophy wikis). In every preliminary debate round, the judge also assigns speaker points for each of the four debaters. Each speaker can receive up to 30 points.

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[12] There could be a novice division, a junior varsity division, a varsity division, or an open division in which all levels compete.

Table 3

Speech Order and Time Limits in a Competitive Academic Policy Debate Round

Speech Order	Time Limits
1st Affirmative Constructive (1AC)	8 minutes
Cross-examination	3 minutes
1st Negative Constructive (1NC)	8 minutes
Cross-examination	3 minutes
2nd Affirmative Constructive (2AC)	8 minutes
Cross-examination	3 minutes
2nd Negative Constructive (2NC)	8 minutes
Cross-examination	3 minutes
1st Negative Rebuttal (1NR)	5 minutes
1st Affirmative Rebuttal (1AR)	5 minutes
2nd Negative Rebuttal (2NR)	5 minutes
2nd Affirmative Rebuttal (2AR)	5 minutes

Table 3. Speech Order and Time Limits in a Competitive Academic High School Policy Debate Round.

Chapter Four: Beginning the Apprenticeship and the Context of Anti-Blackness

Introduction: I am a Young Scholar! I am a Young Activist! We are the Future!—Really?

Field note excerpt, June 2012

It's June 28th, 2012 and the city is sweltering. As the heat wave has brought temperatures soaring to the upper 90s, throughout the city's neighborhoods kids on summer break are seeking respite from the city's heat islands at the beach, in the city's swimming pools, or in the spray from open fire hydrants. For most kids it's a typical summer day in the Northeastern city. Some might be watching their siblings. Some might be working at their summer jobs or playing with their friends. But inside the brick building that spans one square city block and three centuries, 14 high school students are standing in a circle around Dr. Shanara Reid-Brinkley. Terrance is wearing black jeans, black-rimmed glasses, a red t-shirt with a nametag affixed to his upper arm, identifying him to university security as someone who belonged there, and headphones draped around his neck—his permanent accessory. John has on a white t-shirt and khaki shorts with flip-flops. Mickey is sporting a nice new fade and an American Eagle baby blue t-shirt. Some of students are shooting each other furtive glances mixed with surprise, excitement, and nervousness. Others are reading the words written on the whiteboard—I am a young scholar. I am a young activist. We are the future.

While this is the students' first time meeting Dr. Reid-Brinkley, all of them know who she is. She is the most successful Black woman debater in the United States. She is the first Black woman director of debate in the country, an assistant professor of Communication at the University of Pittsburg, a former college debate champion, and she was on the debate team at the first public high school in Atlanta that participated in the first Urban Debate League in the U.S. Dr. Reid-Brinkley became even more notorious on the national high school policy debate *circuit after Black and Brown debaters started heavily citing her dissertation on the Malcolm X Debate Project at the University of Louisville. However, only one of the high school debaters at our Institute has read her entire dissertation. This became apparent after she asked them by way of an introduction, "How many people have read my dissertation?" Only Mickey raised his hand, to which Dr. Reid-Brinkley replied with a serious tone, "Okay. You are already behind if you have not read the dissertation." Wanting the students to learn how to capitalize on academic opportunities that arise, she rhetorically asks the debaters, "How a scholar gon be talkin to you for a whole week and you have not read their work? That is a violation of your academic credibility. You don't have an academic come visit you that you don't read their work before they get here."*

She continues her line of questioning and assessing where the students are at in terms of their preexisting knowledge and asks them, "How many of you have read the DSRB interview on putting the K[13] *into debate?" About a half dozen students raise their hands acknowledging that they read the interview in which she questions the existence of competitive equity in competitive academic policy debate by analyzing the racial, economic, and gendered dynamics at work in the debate community (Reid-Brinkley, 2012).*

"Better. If you have not read that, you are behind, and you need to catch up." Dr. Reid-Brinkley isn't playin because she cares deeply about the critical education of our young Black and Brown scholars and leaders. She believes in pushing them toward their full potential as empowered and critical public intellectuals and creative knowledge producers who can defend their ideas for social justice, racial uplift, and personal liberation. And she doesn't want them to

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[13] "K" is a shorthand name that debaters use to refer to a particular type of critical argument in debate called a "Kritik" (with a K after Heidegger) that questions the epistemological, ontological, or linguistic assumptions undergirding a particular argument or debate case.

end up leaving a debate round—literally or figuratively—feeling deficient, unintelligent, or less-than their White and affluent counterparts.

"Let me tell you what I tell my college debaters—cus I don't coach the movement; I don't have movement teams up here; but I am the coach of the movement, right." She is referring to the movement in debate in which Black and Brown debaters have been speaking out against anti-Blackness and publically critiquing monolingual and monocultural debate norms and stylistic procedures that privilege a White, hetero-patriarchal, male body, and Eurocentric discourse at the exclusion of African-, Latin@-, or indigenous-centered or influenced arguments, performances, epistemologies, and rhetorics.

> *So I coach everybody else around the country on the college level. Airvrybody wanna come talk to me about what I know: 'Give me permission to get on the Dropbox. Can I get on the Facebook page?' I get emails all day long…and this is what I tell them and I'm gon tell you the same thing: If you do not read, don't come askin me questions. If you are not reading, don't come talk to me, because if you re not reading, you have no basis to have a conversation with me.*

She explains how the high school debaters will have plenty of time to read in class and to read with the faculty who will be there to answer questions when they arise about and around what the students are reading.

The high school students are verbally silent before this debate celebrity. DSRB is commanding the mic. Her long dreads are pulled back revealing her serious gaze as she rotates inside the circle of young scholars looking everyone in the eye as she lays it down with a sober tone and gesticulations to punctuate her words. "So this is how I'm gonna start every day, every lecture in the morning to sort of get us up and relaxed before I say some real truth to y'all."

DSRB pauses to look around at the students and seems to pick up on their level of anxiety. Working to reassure them, she quickly offers a humorous side note in a heavy Atlanta accent as if she was talking to her grandmother: "Y'all like, 'uh, she all made me all nervous in my chest!'—and it's all right. It's all right. Sometimes you gotta tell the truth first but we'll have a good time."

"Alright. I'll come in in the mornings and I'll say, 'who are you?' K. And Ima need this response back. If I say, 'Who are you?' I want you to say, 'I am a young scholar.' Who are you?"

In a monotone the class hesitantly replies to DSRB's call and response request, "I am a young scholar."

Unconvinced DSRB shakes her head, "You don't mean that. You don't mean that. Who are you?"

"I am a young scholar," the class responds somewhat louder and with slightly more enthusiasm.

"You don't mean that either. Who are you?"

As if they are finally feeling it, or they merely want the exercise to conclude, the class exclaims, "I am a young scholar!"

"Yes you are," she says folding her arms and nodding her head in approval.

"Okay. After you say that, Ima say, 'Who are you?' and I want you to say, 'I am a young activist.' Okay. Who are you?"

"I am a young activist."

"Okay I don't believe you. Who are you?"

"I am a young activist," the students say loudly in unison.

"Okay. Ima ask you who are you a third time. I want you to say, 'WE are the future' with that emphasis," she says, placing the emphasis on the word "we."

"You understand? Who are you?"

"We are the future."

"You are not paying attention to the emphasis. WE are the future. Who are you?

"WE are the future!"

"That's right. Say it again. Who are you?"

"WE are the future!"

DSRB nods her head in approval of the students' growing participation in this initial call and response sequence. She continues to explain her expectations to the group:

> *Okay. In the mornings when I come in Ima ask you, 'Who are you?' three times, and I want each of those different answers. Ima keep this on the board until you learn it. But by day two, I don't want you to have to look at the board to say it. I want you to look me in my face.*

She offers them a quick side-note to warrant the need for eye contact.

> *You want people to believe you and respect you—you look them in their eye. Okay? You look them in their eye. Because if you turn your eye away, if you can't look somebody in your eye, then you have no confidence in yourself and they know they can walk over you. Right. So I need you to look me in my face when I speak to you. Okay. We gon start at the top. Who are you?*
>
> *"I am a young scholar."*
>
> *"Who are you?"*
>
> *"I am a young activist."*

"Who are you?"

"WE are the future."

"Y'all don't believe. I don't believe you. I need to believe you or I can't lecture. I can't if I don't believe. Who are you?!"

"I am a young scholar!" (Maria says "activist" and Dr. Reid-Brinkley lovingly taps her on the shoulder and smiles as if to say, "It's okay baby—we just getting started.")

"Who are you?"

"I am a young activist!"

"Who are you?"

"WE are the future!"

On June 28th, 2012, the first day of the Ivy League Debate Institute's summer program for high school youth attending Title 1 schools in a large Northeastern city, Dr. Shanara Reid-Brinkley (DSRB)[14] set the tone for what was to unfold over the next eight weeks. Granted, the above exchange might sound like a pep-talk from a coach before a big game—and in some ways it was, although not in the traditional sense of a game bounded in a short period of time, say a few hours—but the event was a window into much more. Knowing that education too often positions students as passive consumers (Freire, 1970) and frames Black and Brown youth as well as those with non-dominant language practices and cultures as deficient (Lee, 1995; Smitherman, 2000; Richardson, 2003; Alim & Baugh, 2004; Alim, 2005), Dr. Reid-Brinkley, like everyone on the faculty, wanted the debaters to recognize and internalize how they are not just students and consumers—and they are certainly not deficits—but they are young scholars, leaders and activists—the future. However, easier said than done; most of the students were doubtful that this was the case.

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[14] I will sometimes refer to Dr. Shanara Reid-Brinkley as DSRB, as this was her nickname on the debate scene—an abbreviation of her name created by two former high school debaters (who were college debaters in 2012 and on faculty at ILDI) who had to save time when citing her in their debate rounds so they abbreviated the five syllables of *Dr. Reid-Brinkley*, to the four in *DSRB* (every second counts in a timed speech!).

In that first morning session of ILDI, 14 out of the 20 high school students enrolled in the institute had managed to make it on time after a one to three-hour commute from different parts of the city, by way of subways, buses, and some walking several miles. During the year they attended different Title 1 high schools, but for this summer they would all coalesce on an Ivy League university's campus to engage in a rigorous training of the mind from early in the morning until late at night, for eight weeks, in order to prepare for competing at national high school debate tournaments around the country during the upcoming academic school year in which the students would be debating the 2012-2013 national high school policy debate topic, or *resolution*:

Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its transportation infrastructure investment in the United States.

All that the students knew at this point was that they were going to work with a robust, diverse, and nationally renowned team of college debate coaches, university professors, Hip-Hop teaching artists, and incredibly successful college debaters. The morning session was intended to introduce the young scholars to the institute, establish expectations, and provide a way for the faculty to initially assess where the students were at in terms of their skills, academic preparation and discipline, their interests, and to get a sense as to what the students were already thinking about in terms of the transportation topic.

After expectations and the institute mantra—*I am a young scholar. I am a young activist. WE are the future!*—were established, DSRB led the class in a discussion about the national resolution prefacing that "Resolution limits are arbitrary but not politically neutral." She calls the young scholars to think about the particular wording of the resolution, like how there is no modifier for "investment" which means that the topic committee who wrote the exact wording of the resolution, expects that there will be debates about what investment means. If the young scholars can engage in debates around the wording of the topic, then they will be engaging in a level of sophisticated discourse that reflects, "how intellectuals speak." DSRB tells them:

> I'm trainin *you* to be an intellectual, right. That way *you* can sit in debates and not be *worried*. You don't have to be *nervous*, because no matter what they say, *you* are an intellectual. You will think around and between they toes before they catch up wichchu if you simply know how to evaluate ideas, right, if you simply can think *critically*.

As the topic changes annually, the argument is that it does so to provide an opportunity for high school debaters to engage in rigorous research and scholarship around different domestic or foreign policy issues each year. However, the scope of what can be debated under any given foreign or domestic topic is highly contested and subjective. All of our debaters have lost many affirmative debate rounds because they been unable to defend that their cases are *topical* (in fact this is one of the main reasons that judges cited for voting against our teams when they were affirmative). At weekend high school debate tournaments, each team will debate an equal number of affirmative and negative rounds, meaning, 50 percent of the time, a team will be affirming some sort of change through a *plan* or *advocacy* that is expected to be *topical,* meaning the plan or advocacy must fall under the purview of that year's national high school policy debate *resolution,* or topic. However, even the scope of the *resolution* is up for debate, as words and phrases can be interpreted in different ways. A common negative strategy is to run an a priori procedural argument called *topicality,* in which they argue that the affirmative's plan or advocacy isn't topical and therefore the affirmative team should lose the debate round, irrespective of whether or not the affirmative wins that their plan for change or advocacy is a good idea. As of the summer of 2012, all of our debaters have lost affirmative rounds on *topicality* because our debaters could not successfully defend and win that either (1) their affirmative plan or advocacy met the negative's interpretation of the topic; or (2) that our debaters' particular interpretation of the national resolution was better than that of their opponents. Those negative teams have been able to persuade judges to agree with their definition of the words and/or phrases in the topic, and hence the negative's overall interpretation of the topic that locates our debaters' affirmative cases as "*untopical,*" or outside the topic; to expect the negative to debate an *untopical* case would be unfair because the negative can't be adequately prepared to debate the affirmative's arguments. The argument is that permitting affirmative teams to run *untopical* cases would mean giving the affirmative team the upper hand thus destroying "competitive equity" and the possibilities for the debaters to get a "good education" from the round.

The debates around the interpretation of the wording of any given national debate topic are not at all unlike debates around interpretations of literacy and language. As sociocultural theories and New Literacy Studies made clear in the way that they challenged the accuracy and ideological neutrality of "great divide" theories and autonomous models of literacy (Scribner & Cole, 1981/1988; Graff, 1982/1988; Heath, 1982; de Castell & Luke, 1983/1988; Scribner, 1984; Street, 1993), the boundaries around what constitutes literacy (as well as what constitutes "English" and "knowledge")—including what is valued, how it is defined, and how it should or can be taught, used, measured, and assessed—is contested, ideological, and highly contingent upon historical and sociocultural contexts and power dynamics (Lee, 1995; Gutiérrez, 2008; Gee, 1989; Gee, 2001; Gee 2015a).

When debating *topicality,* DSRB explains to our debaters that they want to "be at a whole other level of the discussion." Our debaters need to be "considering why, when people say 'fairness'...fair for *who*?" And when teams say "'*good education*,' good education for *who*?" DSRB explains how it is not only important to consider these questions, but our debaters need to be able to clearly, persuasively, and efficiently explain and warrant their interpretation of the topic in a much more sophisticated and nuanced way because our debaters' interpretations are generally much more critical in nature and often go against the grain of what is considered a "normal" interpretation of the topic. Speaking from her experience over the years in debate, DSRB explains to our high school students that as critical debaters, they must be able to develop a critical awareness of the larger discourses (Fairclough, 2001; Gee, 2015a) at work in the game of debate and be able to develop the language and literacies to make these discourses intelligible to others. This is no easy task given how our young Black and Brown scholars are entering and navigating the activity and discourse of competitive academic policy debate in a different way than most other competitors—they are trying to expand the scope of what can debated and the way in which it is debated. DSRB explains to our young scholars that:

> the debaters you are debating generally are going to be very privileged. They don't *understand* debate as a political *process*, right. They just think the topic get chose and they go to Dartmouth for eight weeks and they get to go debate for a year. Ya know what a mean? Like it's real *simple*. But for *us*, when you start thinkin about the *movement* and *nontraditional* debate and *performance* issues it forces you to think *critically and intellectually* about the *game*. Your arguments will be *deeper* as a result. K. The *deeper* you are, the easier it is to respond to them *in less words*. It will take them *three minutes* to respond to somethin that took you *thirty seconds to say*. Because they have to talk around it cus they don't get it. If we are going to talk about *topicality* and our interpretation, we're going to do so with an understanding of the *hyperpolitical* environment of debate itself. We are not going to *pretend* that words are *neutral*. We are not going to *pretend* that they are not just arbitrary.

Terrance speaks up by referencing DSRB's interview on *Putting the K into Debate*:

> Like your interview says, like they way that they are regurgitating the same things, so like, when you make, when they start making those education claims about how we need like topic-specific education, you make the argument that that this same regurgitation just reinforces the same information that you already learned so that the only real way to actually gain any new education is to engage in these alternative perspectives.

DSRB is nodding throughout Terrance's comment. "Absolutely," she responds. "You want to say that your education is bad in the status quo. I don't know what you smokin!" All of the scholars laugh. Their ears are perking up. They can relate to what is being discussed because they have experienced these rounds time and time again and have expressed feeling shortchanged by what they learned in their debates. Even though the topic changes from year to year, our students express how they feel like they end up debating the same cases every year, ones in which the affirmative team's plan somehow prevents global annihilation (from "terrorists" or the erosion of United States' hegemony, or some other scenario patched together from different authors who often are not referencing each other) or ones in which the negative team argues that passing the affirmative's plan will set in motion a catastrophic chain of events that results in extinction (a negative argument called a "disadvantage"). DSRB says that if the debaters are hearing the same arguments over and over again, year after year, that *that* is what is really bad education because it forecloses on the scholars' ability to critically engage with existing literature to find holes, contradictions, and space for new ideas and the creation of new knowledge.

One of ILDI's major goals was to cultivate the literacies and habits of mind that would enable our young people to engage in academic discourse and critically research to discover and produce new knowledge. DSRB reinforces this goal by extending Terrance's observation about hearing the same arguments year after year, necessitating the injection of "alternate perspectives" into debate because traditional debate too often:

> leads to a regurgitation of information. It stops scholarly *growth* and *intellectual interest*. It *prevents you* from *understanding* how to *chain* ideas together to the point that you get to the point where you disagree with *all* of the *authors*, and you *suggest* something *new*. That's what a *scholar* does. That's what *academics do*. We don't just talk about what somebody else said and nothing new. You talk about what somebody else said because you want to say this person talked about this, and they got *so far down* the road, right, but then they got *lost* and I had to part ways with them. Here's why I parted ways, right. Here's this *hole* in the *literature* that *my argument fills*. That's what *academics do*. We don't just take other people's information and regurgitate that back to an audience because why would you *buy our books?* You'd just need to buy *one* book and know what *everybody* else said if that's what academia was or if that's what scholarship was, or that's what intellectual production was, right. *Instead*, we need to be taking these debates, we need to be reading the research, yes. We need to be engaging with the authors, *yes*. But we need to not *assume* that just because somebody has a PhD that they are *always* right or that they have the only and best idea. Although you better have a real good idea before you come at me like that. *But*, you all are intelligent. The more you read, the more you think, the better ideas you will come up with. And you shouldn't be ashamed to come up with your own scholarly ideas.

On this first day of the institute, DSRB is trying to help the young scholars understand the difference between a scholar and someone who is a one-trick pony show demonstrating the same old tricks their owners taught them and has taught all of the other ponies, year after year. In order to produce new scholarship, like a literature review is to a dissertation, reading what has already been written is not the end of research but rather a foundation upon which to ground and set up new and original research. DSRB is introducing the young scholars to how to do graduate level research and create graduate level scholarship. At the same time, this is still fairly uncharted terrain for our young scholars. They don't yet quite grasp all of what she is saying, but their thoughts are percolating.

John raises his hand and confides that he can't find the right book to make the argument he came up with so he doesn't know how to make his argument in a debate round without having an expert who has already written about it. John seems to be used to deferring to the experts for validation. He isn't yet aware that he can be the expert, too.

> **John**: I have some I guess theories about the things I talk about. I've been reading these books and I'm like *sorta*, and *hell yeah*, and *like jumping up and down*, like *shit*!—like the word Latino is bad or the word Hispanic is bad and this is what we're writing. So how do you invoke your terminal ideology that's not in a book inside the debate community?

While John thinks that he has hit a roadblock because no one else has written the argument he is thinking about, he is actually trying to synthesize what he is reading into new knowledge that he can share in debate. DSRB praises John for what he has shared and tries to help him become aware of how the moves he is making are indicative of a scholar: "The first thing that you have done which is absolutely the correct first step to start is to read." Instead of merely making the claim that reading is important, DSRB goes much deeper and provides the warrants behind why she is telling them to "Read *voraciously.* You should *read* as much as possible" because she tells them that, "Everything that you read provides you with the texture and language to make your own argument." Instead of adopting the process of relying upon block quotes from authors in lieu of the debaters' annotations and original words, as is typical among most competitive academic high school policy debaters, she says that the debaters must go beyond mere snippets of texts and get a more holistic picture of the big ideas at play and locate the holes in the literature, like an advanced graduate student would do in order to situate a research study in existing theories and empirical research while also setting up the significance of an original research project, for example.

> It's about reading *whole chapters*. Right. And having these thoughts that come up in your head like: I agree with this part; I disagree with that part; I think I could probably do

> better on this issue. We should think about that. You have to take notes through the reading process…I want your engagement, your interrogation and engagement with the text. So here's how you use this as a part of writing.

As DSRB warrants her argument in support of reading widely and writing consistently, she is simultaneously providing all of the young scholars in the room with instruction around a reflexive reading and writing process that requires the students' engagement with and interrogation of texts, critical thinking, and trust in the value of their own confusion, seeing unanswered questions not as necessarily problems with their comprehension, but as potential opportunities for new research that can create new knowledge. At the same time, DSRB anchors her direct instruction as *already* being evidenced in the process in which John is engaging: "I think what you are doing is *exactly* the process that you would go through. You're reading things, coming up with ideas, jotting down ideas."

She pauses and returns back to John's expressed insecurity of the questions surfacing as he reads. She explains that these questions are a very positive sign and a normal and necessary component of the practice of research: "A lot of your ideas when you first start researching and writing are disparate. So you gon have idea over there," she says as she points to her left. "Idea ova there," she says, pointing to her right. "Idea ova there. Idea ova there. It's gon be real confusing. Right. You've just got a bunch of stuff." Yet DSRB tells them that when this confusion arises, the ILDI faculty has the young scholars' backs; together they can sift through the various arguments and determine some of the best ways to anchor the young scholars' arguments. "That's when you bring all that stuff to us, right. And I be like, 'That's trash. That's trash. That's trash." The students laugh. "*Them* three things. Now let's try to make an argument out of that."

She then explains what they should expect next in this process. “Then I’m gonna say, ‘Who are you reading? Who is influencing this argument you’re trying to make?’” She will help guide them toward a closer reading—“Then Ima say now go read more of *this* part. Go read some more of *that* part”—after which point she will tell them to start synthesizing what they read through writing, “Come back to me in two days with three pages of your written text about what you think this argument is. No cards[15].” To be sure, this process of having young people create a new argument is not something that requires the activity of debate. Any English instructor who wants her students to create an original and persuasive essay can easily adopt this method. At the same time, the English teacher will have to find ways to deal with the likely reality that she may students who do not believe they are capable of creating original knowledge, as was experienced by the ILDI instructors.

While our ILDI high school students were clearly doubtful at first about being scholars, activists, and the future, over the course of several weeks, most came to believe it, as was evidenced by the young scholars’ confidence in their original researched debate arguments that they were excited to share with new ILDI faculty who rotated in over the course of the summer to teach at the institute, and with family and community members at the public debate and community celebration at the institute’s end. Later, during the 2012-2013 school year, instead of using pre-written debate cases found in debate files created at other summer debate institutes like Dartmouth or Michigan, or created and spoon-fed by adult coaches (a very common practice as coaches care about their students’ success and want to provide them with the best chance at winning), the ILDI debaters would choose to run their original cases at weekend debate tournaments. Additionally, during the school year, several of the young scholars would share their work with a community of academics and teaching artists at academic conferences and events hosted at colleges and universities like Urban Word's Preemptive Education academic conference at New York University, and the Getting Real III series at Teachers College, Columba University. And, during the 2012-2013 school-year, when the debaters posted on social networking sites, and when they were in between debate rounds in the halls of tournaments, auditoriums, and cafeterias, the young scholars would reference how they were young scholars, young activists, and they were the future.

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[15] By “cards” she is referring to the block quotes that debaters read as evidence in debate rounds. A card will consist of at least one paragraph from a book, a periodical, a policy report, and etcetera. Back in the day, these block quotes would be written on index cards. While the index cards eventually faded out of use when debaters began compiling evidence on 8 ½ by 11-inch paper, the terminology remained. Instead of having one piece of evidence written on one index card (“one card”), one 8 ½ by 11-inch piece of paper might have one or more “cards” on the same topic, a much more efficient method of organizing evidence (and necessary for evidence that is too long to fit on a small index card).

However, the beginning of the summer was rocky. Our students experienced wide-spread social narratives that frame Black and Brown youth as deficient, unintelligent, deviant, and threatening. And at national tournaments, in online debate forums, and even on some debate ballots at official debate tournaments, many of our students or their close friends in debate had been repeatedly told by judges and other competitors to "get the fuck out of debate"—as ILDI instructors Damiyr Davis and Miguel Feliciano's put it in 2011 their introduction to Team Rev's (Devonte Escoffery, aka Fatality, and Stephon Adams, aka The E-Lusion) second negative constructive speech in the infamous quarterfinal round that got the four high school seniors disqualified from the Harvard tournament for breaking tournament rules. The White supremacist narrative about Black and Brown youths being intellectually inferior and lazy (Hernstein & Murray, 1994), mired in criminality, drenched in materialism, and tattooed with "lack" (Fine & Ruglis, 2009), bled into the activity of competitive academic policy debate and was reflected in the discourse of many of the gatekeepers of the activity and the debaters they coached.

Additionally, while our debaters had been repeatedly told that they didn't belong in debate, they were simultaneously reading that they didn't belong on public streets, either.

"The Factness of Anti-Blackness"[16]

On February 26, 2012, 17-year-old Trayvon Benjamin Martin was murdered because he was a young Black man in a hoody who therefore looked "suspicious" to George Zimmerman. His death loomed over me as a sobering reminder that our Black and Brown children's lives on the planet were not guaranteed. When I would tell the debaters to let me know when they got home after a tournament (as they each took separate subway and bus lines), I was acting not only out of my responsibility as a chaperone, but beneath the surface lingered a fear that they too could be Trayvon. For the students, knowing that Trayvon could have been them, their family, or friends, was a sign pointing to the disposability and fungibility of their Black bodies (Patterson, 1985; Hartman, 1997). And for those who do not think that Trayvon's death was due to the color of his skin, I would implore them to ask themselves: how many young White men (or White women) have been in a similar situation? How many young White men or women express how they have been profiled while shopping or have reported incidents of racial profiling by police? All of my Black and Brown students have.

The ILDI young scholars routinely came in contact with debate judges who told them they would not vote for "performance teams" teams—teams whose critical debating acknowledged and called out the way in which "the performance of identity is integral to the 'stylistic procedures' that produce a social and competitive environment hostile to shades of difference" (Reid-Brinkley, 2008, pp. 66-77). Consider young scholar and ILDI participant, John Ortiz', description of attending national tournaments as a high school UDL debater:

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[16] This subheading is adapted from the title to the persuasive essay about anti-Blackness that Mickey wrote and sent to me in the fall of 2012.

> Because as a UDL debater, you're at Harvard, you're at Emory, you're at these big universities and it's not packed. It's a big, open space. It's interesting to see how the affluent debaters all stick together, how all the rich White kids don't want to like speak to you, how the judges interact around you, and how, when you happen to grab a seat, you're around a whole bunch of Black or Latin@ debaters, or even the people of color. And it's just like wow, it's not—it's a form of—it's very segregated, the atmosphere. And those teams that do have one, two sprinkles of chocolate, happen to push their debaters to the side, because that debater is either on scholarship at the high school, or they're even just not as important as the top team, right, cus the top team went to all the debate camps and the top did team did this and the top team did that (personal communication, June 26, 2015).

John and his colleagues had their own way of coping, and Hip-Hop was a key ingredient. While in those public common areas where debaters would coalesce in racially segregated clusters awaiting the next debate round, John said that he and his friends

> were always on the side. We'd always play around and stuff. We'd always seem unorthodox because we'd always listen to music *loud* on purpose. We'd do it on *purpose.* It's a *safe* space. That's how we'd make it a *home space,* right—drop some Last Poets on them *on* purpose. Drop some Bambaataa, some Tupac—no censorship—come on now. Y'all can't do nothing. (personal communication, June 26, 2015).

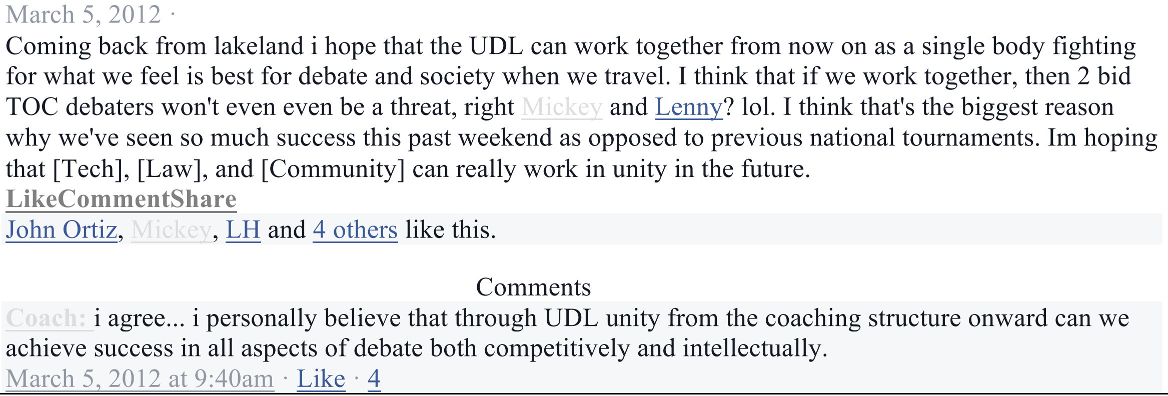
From New York's Hip-Hop pioneers, The Last Poets and Afrika Bambaataa, to Oakland's Tupac Shakur, Hip-Hop helped the young scholars carve out a "safe space" whenever they felt—or were implicitly or explicitly told—that they did not belong because of their race, ethnicity, language, or culture. Having the ability to blast the volume of their sociocultural identities "on purpose" was one way in which the debaters tried to energetically alter geographies of exclusion and create a *"home space*" in which the young scholars could retain and preserve their multifaceted identities, cultures, and their whole selves—"no censorship"—to transform spaces historically dominated by affluent White male bodies, not "sprinkles of chocolate", into a place that was a *home space* filled with love and family and wherein our young scholars could feel a sense of belonging and rootedness because Hip-Hop was something that was integral to who they were. Yes, they were debaters; and they were also Hip-Hop. One did not have to be at the exclusion of the other. Instead of subjecting themselves to learn and teach in an environment that Oakland emcee's Mystic characterizes as a dynamic of "Absence of color so they try to fade me out" (Ludlum, 2014), the UDL debaters gave the debate space a Hip-Hop injection. Although our debaters used music to create a home space at debate tournaments, the young scholars are pointing to the ability of music to do this in general. If other educational venues welcomed young people's cultures through music into the learning environment, it might hold the potential to have a similar effect in spaces outside debate, as well.

As coaches of Urban Debate Leagues who knew that for about 10 weekends a year, 20-30 days a year, our debaters would be forced to create homes in spaces that the young scholars were reading as being "behind enemy lines" (dead prez, 2003) and compete against schools who had infinitely more resources to train and coach their debaters—not to mention the fact that White debaters had the luxury of not having to balance their time spent preparing their debate arguments with fortifying themselves against the psychic weight of racial exclusion—we were resolved to take action and respond on multiple levels to the coaching disparities, competitive inequities, and the often hostile environments in which our young scholars were learning and growing. In light of those realities, I started the ILDI Debate Center at the University in the beginning of 2012 in an attempt to consolidate our league's meager coaching resources and create a space wherein debaters from all of the city's UDL member schools could come together on a regular basis to prepare for upcoming tournaments, dialogue about important issues in their lives, and provide support for each other in general. Instead of dividing the different schools into a hierarchal competition against one another at tournaments, with each school pitted against the other for the win, the aim was UDL unity. The young scholars would prep together and share research, strategies, scouting reports, and coaching support. The league would be like one big debate squad, a united front of Brown and Black creative intellectual soldiers marching in solidary onto historically lily-White battlefields to win together as one team. But victory did not mean riding the wave of victory by winning debate rounds—it meant changing the tide of debate entirely.

While some may see debate as fundamentally at odds with dialogue or even analogous to war because of the perceived terms of engagement and the fact that there there is a winner and a loser, in the community of practice of this study, debate is a way for young Black and Brown scholars and leaders to dialogue with one another around their investigation into common problems and the possible solutions, and to enter into public discourse in order to reclaim and transform deficit narratives about who the young scholars are, where they come from, and the value of their languages, cultures, literacy practices, and ideas for change. Whereas competitive academic policy debate has traditionally been a site for individuals to demonstrate their superior mastery over the modes of persuasion in order to claim championship titles, here, debate is cultivated in a community of love—care, compassion, commitment, and respect (hooks, 2000)—where participants care about each other's well-being, and are invested in each other's ontological and epistemological growth, academic success, and their critical capacity for navigating and being leaders in their schools, the activity of debate, and social and civic spaces. And given their focus on social justice in their critical research and debating, when any one of the young scholars win a debate, it is seen as a collective victory in the politics of resistance against racial and social injustice.

The initial results of the Debate Center were positive. One debater posted on Facebook after a tournament in March that they hoped "that the UDL can work together from now on as a single body fighting for what we feel is best for debate and society when we travel" (personal communication, March 5, 2012). The debater thought that the UDL teams did so well at that March tournament because all of the UDL schools in our city worked together for the first time at a national tournament. Consequently, the debater posted that he hoped that the schools "can really work in unity in the future" (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Students Stress Importance of UDL Unity on Facebook.



March 5, 2012 ·
Coming back from lakeland i hope that the UDL can work together from now on as a single body fighting for what we feel is best for debate and society when we travel. I think that if we work together, then 2 bid TOC debaters won't even even be a threat, right Mickey and Lenny? lol. I think that's the biggest reason why we've seen so much success this past weekend as opposed to previous national tournaments. Im hoping that [Tech], [Law], and [Community] can really work in unity in the future.
LikeCommentShare
John Ortiz, Mickey, LH and 4 others like this.

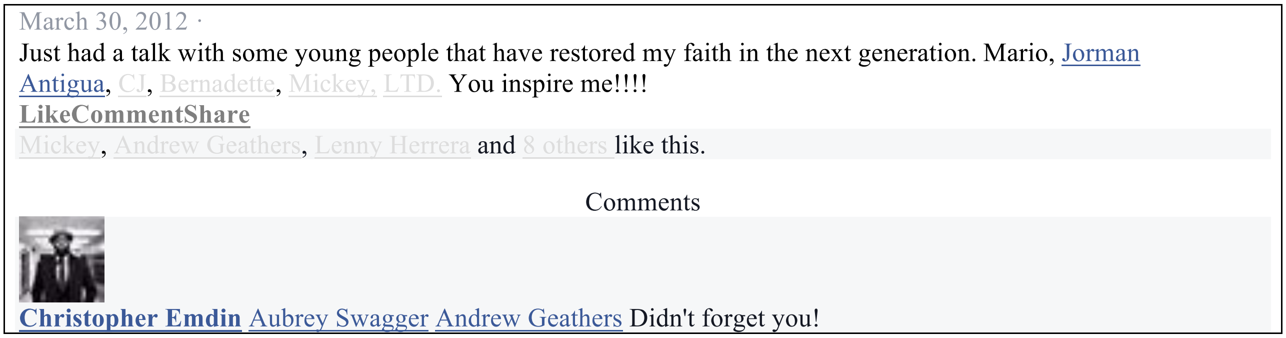
Comments
Coach: i agree... i personally believe that through UDL unity from the coaching structure onward can we achieve success in all aspects of debate both competitively and intellectually.
March 5, 2012 at 9:40am · Like · 4

Figure 2. Students stress importance of UDL unity on Facebook.

That young scholar was only one of many students calling for opportunities for UDL unity in the face of challenging conditions. And professors who attended as guests were taking note of the significance of this mobilization, too. On a Friday in March of 2012, Dr. Christopher Emdin attended the ILDI Debate Center as a guest to listen to our young scholars and leaders talk about these issues. As a result of building with the debaters, Emdin wrote a post on Facebook praising them for their inspiring efforts (see Figure 3). Our young scholars' calls for action and the related support generated among faculty and students at the University were a major force propelling the establishment of the ILDI summer camp of 2012.

Figure 3. University Faculty Giving Praise to Students Working at the Debate Center.

Christopher Emdin



March 30, 2012 ·
Just had a talk with some young people that have restored my faith in the next generation. Mario, Jorman Antigua, CJ, Bernadette, Mickey, LTD. You inspire me!!!!

LikeCommentShare

Mickey, Andrew Geathers, Lenny Herrera and 8 others like this.

Comments

Christopher Emdin Aubrey Swagger Andrew Geathers Didn't forget you!

Figure 3. University faculty giving praise to students working at the Debate Center.

As I began to recruit staff from around the country and have conversations with them about our young scholars' experiences and goals, emerging from our collective conversation was one extremely clear fact: we couldn't support our young scholars' intellectual growth over the summer without attending to the environment in which they were debating and living as Black and Brown youth—the reality of anti-Blackness was an indelible feature of the context in which our students were learning, teaching, and navigating the world.

As anti-Blackness was a persistent backdrop in countless conversations leading up to the summer institute, the faculty discussed how we should address it head on. Consequently, a major theme that was explored during the first two weeks of the institute was anti-Blackness' relationship to policy making, civil society, social movements, and debate. As our debaters participated in the activity of "policy debate," we wanted to provide a forum in which they could freely discuss their growing concerns around the perceived limitations of policy reform in a restricted democracy to address anti-Blackness in any substantive way because as Cornel West (1999) wrote:

> White supremacy dictates the limits of the operation of American democracy – with black folk the indispensable sacrificial lamb vital to its sustenance. Hence black subordination constitutes the necessary condition for the flourishing of American democracy, the tragic prerequisite for America itself. (p. 98)

During the time in which our students were learning in school and debate about American government and the importance of civic participation, Trayvon Martin was murdered. And he was not an anomaly. 2012 was the same year that unarmed 19-year old football player Kendrec McDade of Pasadena, California, was shot seven times by police responding to a false report; Rekia Boyd, 22 years young, was shot in the back of the head and killed by a stray bullet from an off-duty Chicago police officer's unregistered firearm who claimed he saw a man brandishing a gun in an alleyway; 27-year old Tamon Robinson was mowed down by a police car in Canarsie, Brooklyn, after police incorrectly suspected the unarmed man of stealing paving stones—an incident that several of our students protested in a walk-out at their high schools; and there was Nehemian Dillard, 29, in Gainesville, Florida, Wendell Allen, 20 years young in New Orleans, LA, and 8-year-old Ervin Jefferson in Atlanta; and then among many others was Ramarley Graham, who was 18 years young when he was shot and killed by a New York police officer who chased him into his home in the Bronx without a warrant. In November, it would be 17-year-old Jordan Davis who was murdered because he was playing loud music. It was increasingly difficult for our debaters to believe that their Black and Brown bodies actually mattered to civil society writ-large.

Our young scholars also felt their disposability in school. According district data reported by the New York Civil Liberties Union (2012), during the 2010-2011 school year, out of the 73,441 school suspensions, 50 percent were Black students who accounted for only 30 percent of the student population. And oftentimes, minor disciplinary incidents at schools escalated to the point where police were arresting or ticketing more than 15 students a day in the NYC public schools from January through March. Over 96 percent of the arrests were Black or Latin@ students and over 73 percent were male. To put it lightly, most of our students did not look forward to going to schools wherein minor disciplinary infractions, like a student wearing a hoody, not having solid black shoes, or refusing to hand over a cell phone that contained an essay written on the subway ride to school, could land them in the criminal justice system. Additionally, if our students managed to evade becoming a statistic of zero-tolerance policies, our students expressed how they felt they weren't getting the education they deserved. As Linda Darling-Hammond (1997) said, there might be a right to school, but students should have a right to learn. While the young scholars recognized that they had some exceptional teachers, the young scholars could not understand the utility in the amount of time required for state-mandated testing, and they struggled to make sense of their growing awareness of funding inequities for schools located in low-income neighborhoods, which for our students' schools, also had large populations of Blacks and Latin@s. These inequities really came into focus for our high school debaters as they visited well-funded schools at weekend tournaments. As the ILDI students travelled during the 2011-2012 academic year debating at suburban and private schools without metal detectors and police fleets, but equip with science labs, libraries, gymnasiums, and bathrooms on every floor—apparent "luxuries"—our young scholars expressed how they felt shortchanged educationally.

***They Schools*: The Context of Schooling in the Debaters' Lives**

"In honor of my summer reading assignment for school -,-" was Mickey's headline to a dead prez song, *They Schools,* that he posted on his Facebook page the summer prior to ILDI 2012 (September 5, 2011). Comparing schools to prisons and a whole social system that has been propelled by anti-Blackness and exploitative capitalism "ever since slavery", M-1 and stic.man, activists and rappers who make up the Hip-Hop duo dead prez (dpz), begin the song with a clip from the film *American History X:* "Why haven't you learned anything?!" which is followed by “Man that school shit is a joke/The same people who control the school system / control the prison system and the whole social system / Ever since slavery / nawimsayin?” (Olugbala & Ibomu, 2000). The hook to the song is “They schools can’t teach us shit/ My people need freedom, we tryna get all we can get / All my high school teachers can suck my dick / Tellin me White man lies straight bullshit (bullshit) / They schools aint teachin us what we need to know to survive / They schools don’t educate, all they teach the people is lies.” While some might easily dismiss *They Schools* for its explicit language and disparaging comments against teachers, a quick dismissal would be at the expense of thoughtfully engaging the text and leaving room to explore M-1 and stic.man’s arguments in *They Schools* including why they say:

> ...schools aint teachin us nothing
> They ain teachin us nothin but how to be slaves and hardworkers
> For White people to build up they shit
> Make they businesses successful while it’s exploitin us
> ...And they aint teachin us nothing related to
> Solvin our own problems, knowwhatimsayin?
> Aint teachin us how to get crack out the ghetto
> They aint teachin us how to stop the police from murdering us
> And brutalizing us, they aint teachin us how to get our rent paid
> ...You go to school the fuckin police searchin you
> ...like this is a military compound
> Knowhatimsayin? So school don't even relate to us
> Until we have some shit where we control the fuckin school system
> Where we reflect how we gon solve our own problems
> Them niggas aint gon relate to school, shit that just how it is
> Knowhatimsayin? And I love education, knowhatimsayin?
> But if education aint elevatin me, then you knowhatimsayin it aint
> Takin me where I need to go on some bullshit, then fuck education

Dpz’s critique of schooling in capitalist America echoes some of the theorizing and empirical research found in reproduction theory around class and the production and reproduction of inequalities in education (Bowles and Gintis, 1970; Anyon, 1980/2006; Willis, 1981; Carnoy and Levin, 1985) and in African American literacies and rhetoric(s) (Perry, 2003; Richardson, 2003; Smitherman, 2006) around race and education. Being too quick to dismiss dpz’s lyrics would limit one's ability to draw these connections and make it very difficult to consider why the song resonates so strongly with some of our young Black and Brown scholars in the first place.

The importance of suspending a knee-jerk reaction of judgment also holds true when listening to our young people's commentary on their educational experiences. There can be something to be learned from how our young scholars might put their schooling on blast in face-to-face conversations and in online forums, criticizing their homework assignments and comparing their time in class to a prison sentence. We can simultaneously recognize the fact that there are countless incredible teachers who are tirelessly committed to our young scholars' success in life, employment, and higher education, and who get up every morning and work late into the night to draw upon all of the resources at their disposal to teach the young generation, while also listening to and hearing our young scholars' critiques that might indicate points of disconnect or illuminate possibilities to strengthen the hard work that is already being done by good teachers, and build upon and extend the languages and literacies that students bring with them into the classroom.

"What did you have to read?" Bernadette, replied to Mickey's disparaging Facebook post about his assigned summer reading list.

"*Great Expectation* by Charles Dickens. I feel like tht shit is 6th grade material, cant we read some Mills or Wilderson? lol." Mickey felt unchallenged and debate seemed to make up the difference—or partially created the conditions within which he felt unchallenged by his formal education—as he dove into readings that he said had direct relevance to his life like the *The Racial Contract* by Charles Mills and essays on anti-Blackness by Frank B. Wilderson III.

Bernadette, who was an ILDI graduate fellow in the summer of 2012, replied that her teacher at Tremont had assigned *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. DuBois and *The Social*

Contract by Jean Jacques Rousseau. “Doesn’t that sound like a contradiction???????” she wrote back to Mickey.

“At least you get to read Dubois, and yes it is a HUGE contradiction *pulls out Racial Contract*, but maybe thats the whole point of reading them both. What does he teach?”

“AP English and ‘CUNY’ English’” Bernadette answers.

Responding with an upset emoticon, Mickey writes, “I just got a meaningless book that will have no bearing on my life, that they picked from some random list of ‘10th grade approved books.’”

“LOL see they have to ‘approve’ of it before you can read it little Mickey” Bernadette replies, capturing the way in which she feels schools and education policies can infantilize students, restricting engagement with texts that go beyond prescribed book lists, perceived “reading levels,” and standardized curricula.

On the first day of school during the 2011-2012 academic year, Mickey posted: “In prison, 2 more years to go!” to which Bernadette replied “Lol. You in too? Well I only have 9 months and a few days left on my sentence! (grin emoticon)” (Facebook posts, September 8, 2011). As Tupac (1996) said, “You ain’t gotta be in jail to be doin time;” our young scholars consistently signified that curricular constraints are shackles restricting students’ intellectual, cultural and linguistic exploration and knowledge production.

“Class was irrelevant,” said Terrance, another young debater, “cus class is kinda like doin the work, like doin the hard labor per se, not the intellectual work” (personal communication, December 4, 2014). Part of this seemed to be because he was comparing school to his experiences in debate: “nothing is as deep as whatchu talk about in debate” (personal communication, December 4, 2014). Terrance was thirsty for learning new things and debate provided him with that space, as opposed to school where he said learning doesn't take place. He described school as laborious work and "not the intellectual work" (personal communication, December 4, 2014) that led to the generation of new thinking and ideas. He explained that at weekend debate tournaments or summer debate institutes,

> I genuinely do like get new information out of it so by the time you go back to school, it's not like learning—like you don't learn to create new thought or whatever. You kinda just learn to consume old stuff, which is acceptable if you are learning about history; there's a lot of memorization. I think that's fine. Are there better ways to learn history? Probably. (personal communication, December 4, 2014)

Terrance, a student who would end up at Dartmouth College on a full-ride scholarship after graduating from his Title 1 high school, detested how school seemed like a place to consume knowledge for its regurgitation (Freire, 1970) on standardized tests: "I hate examinations. I think that those are all stupid. I think that Regents are stupid. Like the end-of-the-year state exams, all of those are just stupid. I think Common Core is stupid" (personal communication, December 4, 2014). Without reservations, he vocalized a strong distaste for cookie-cutter units and lesson plans: "I think, whatchu call em? The syllabus—well not the syllabus but like the one the teacher makes, like the one the schools' make, like those are all stupid. Like they're just such a waste" (personal communication, December 4, 2014). This waste wasn't meant to imply that syllabi or lesson plans were inherently unnecessary, but rather, he viewed the ones he received in his high school classes as antithetical to entrusting teachers with some modicum of freedom to design curricula based upon their educational training and experience as teachers. He went so far as to say that standardized curriculum snuffed out the life force, creativity, and love from teaching:

> Like I feel like, especially for teachers if they go to college, they go to like, get their master's because they are learning about something that they love. Like they can spend

> their years teaching based upon how someone else told them to like teach and they can't teach to like engage new—like I'm pretty sure there are more fun ways to engage in math. It's to the point where like teachers are just like super dispassionate. Like they're excited to like see the alums when they come back cus they like—oh, the alums and this that, and it's a new way to talk—but when they're engaging the actual class, it's just like, it becomes more work than doing what you love. And they say you never work if you do what you love but it doesn't seem like they doin what they love at that point. Which I think it's possible because professors definitely doin what they love." (personal communication, December 4, 2014)

In his personal statement on his application to the 2012 summer institute, John explained his motivations for attending ILDI as a break from a Eurocentric curriculum taught in schools:

> I don't believe that ignorance is bliss. Rather I believe the cost of ignorance is higher than the cost for education. Debate is the only interscholastic activity that allows us to understand education in the way that has no curriculum, school teachers or cultures for 3 days & teaches a whole curriculum on "Global". How do you call it "Global" & only speak on behalf of Europeans? Rather when we have a arena that we can criticize and challenge one another's ideas is a site of true knowledge production. And that's why I like debate. More over we need to acquire the tools to deploy our arguments and becoming organic intellectuals.

Unlike how he saw school, John wanted to be in a place that fostered robust intellectual exchanges, "true knowledge production," and provided preparation for developing the resources to effectively share that new knowledge.

Many of our students explained how debate was the only place where they felt like their voices were heard. One student, Mario, wrote on their application "I love debate! It is my favorite activity it is the only place where I feel my voice is heard."

Others reported gratitude for teachers who encouraged them to debate, as it profoundly changed the way they thought about themselves; they wanted to feel like they were worth something and that their voices mattered. Toussaint, a first generation young Black Haitian man going into 12th grade, wrote in his ILDI personal statement in 2012,

> Everywhere I was no matter if it was my parents house [or] school I felt like I was nothing but a shadow that didn't matter. I was even once told that I wasn't important by

> love ones. Before I got into high school I believe that I was nothing and my voice didn't make a difference. That all change once I got into debate.

Toussaint's "progressive [high school] teachers" encouraged him to join the debate team. As a result, he said he developed a sense of self-worth and a critical capacity to question power relations: "The voices that told me that I didn't matter were silent and the mental shackles that binded me dissolved (Ignorance). It through debate I was able to question power and question the world around me." His reasons for attending ILDI in the summer of 2012 was to get a "boost towards becoming the great critical debater that I want to be," because "Debate gave me a voice to "talk back" to those that ever doubted me." Through the institute he hoped to have his "Technical skills get sharper and my knowledge base on critical philosophies increase." Furthermore, he was interesting in being able to transform the activity of debate: "I'm also hoping through this institute I will obtain the knowledge to change and revolutionize debate and truly make it a subversive activity."

Similarly, Elizabeth, a young Black woman who grew up in the southern borough and debated on the same team as Toussaint, wrote that after her first year of debating she too wanted to work to alleviate problems she was now discovering in the world: "Being in debate has caused me not only to learn about so many different problems in society but actually want to step up and become a leader in my community both debate and home."

Another incoming 11th grader, Aikeem, a young Black man from the city's southern borough, explained on his application how he thought he could "meet new people" at the institute and "learn to interact better." After debating for the first time during the 2011-2012 academic year, Aikeem said that he was becoming a different type of person:

> Debate changed me into someone new. It helped me to do more research and enabled me to learn more. Before I used to stay home sleep and just play video games. Now I am at least thinking of how to get better and work on new speaker drills. Debate helps me to be able to go outside and think of the world in a different way from the way I seen it before.

Another debater noted how, “I love sharing this activity and if it were up to me debate would be a national graduation requirement!”

One incoming 11th grader who had just finished her first year of debating explained on her personal statement that debate was an academic sport that she chose instead of something physical because she wanted to “learn real-life skills.” She explained that debate taught her teamwork, listening skills, and improved her critical understanding of the world around her:

> Being a part of my Debate team this year helped me learn how to work within a group, work with just one person (partner), listen to my coaches, help others, and even challenge the society in which we live in. After being a part of the debate team I am now more involved and interested in what is going on outside of school, outside of the State...and even outside of our country.

She reflected that debate invigorated her interest in politics and she saw a direct relationship between improving her academics in history classes: “Never have I been so interested in politics and social politics. Not to mention, debate aids in my history grade very much, especially when we talk about the different socio-economic isms (capitalism, communism, socialism, etc.).”

Another debater from the southern borough of the city explained how in debate she was able to find her true talent: “All our lives we try to search for something were good at, something that makes us feel whole. Yes, I was good at many things but I found myself in debate. For once I felt as if I had some sort of talent.” Debate clearly mattered in our young scholars’ lives on multiple levels and their expressed commitment to strengthen their academic and public voices, their ability to effectuate change and uplift their communities helped propel us forward into the establishment of the summer Ivy League Debate Institute of 2012.

ILDI Summer Institute 2012

The first summer Ivy League Debate Institute, which ran from June 27-August 25th, 2012, was an intense summer workshop for 40 youth going into grades 9-12. Housed on an Ivy League university's campus, the program included: individual research, brief writing, creative writing and music production, leadership training, public speaking workshops, seminars on social and critical theories, and practice debates with an experienced and diverse faculty and low student-teacher ratios. Not only did the free workshop provide students with training and supplies to prepare them to debate during the 2012-2013 debate season, but it also had an mission to enable students to access the academic benefits of debate through a curriculum that wrapped around the students' lives (Sealey-Ruiz, 2007). Curriculum and hands-on activities were designed to connect with students' interests and lived experiences by freeing them to use Hip-Hop culture and leverage their community-based literacies and languages to speak to the issues in competitive academic policy debate.

During the institute students collaborated with nationally renowned college debaters and coaches, professors, and Hip-Hop teaching artists to design critical research proposals and create dynamic speeches by utilizing a wide-range of rhetorical and literary techniques. I invited some of the top college debaters and esteemed professors from around the country who were experts on critical theory, African American rhetoric, and Hip-Hop (see Figure 4). Hip-Hop teaching artists worked collaboratively with college debaters, professors and high school students. Graduate students from the host university occasionally stopped by classes to enter into the dialogue. We also had dope guest speakers from local universities and even had professors Skyped in from other states. Also Skyping in was, Jael Myrick, former urban debater, emcee, and city-councilmember from Richmond, California. Dr. Ernest Morrell gave a welcoming address. Dr. Christopher Emdin gave a keynote at the awards ceremony after which he joined the young scholars and leaders in a rap cypher with DJ Static dropping the beat on the ones and twos[17].

Figure 4. ILDI 2012 Summer Institute Faculty's University Affiliations

Wake Forest University
University of Louisville
University of Pittsburg
UC Davis
CUNY
Rutgers University
Emporia University
Western Connecticut State University
Towson University
Teachers College, Columbia University

Figure 4. ILDI 2012 summer institute faculty's university affiliations.

Some instructors stayed throughout the institute for consistency, but each week one to two instructors rotated out as we welcomed one or two new instructors with different research interests and areas of specialization.

The institute sought to cultivate essential academic and critical literacies by having students work with their peers and educators to read, research, discuss, analyze and apply seminal texts from critical theory, media and cultural studies, Hip-Hop, public policy, and social theory to develop arguments, policy proposals and speeches that addressed issues related to equity and social justice in participants' schools, communities, and the larger society. Students were expected to share their work with communities of learners and educators at the community awards banquet and public debate at the end of ILDI, and at local and national weekend debate tournaments throughout the school year. Faculty also encouraged students to present their research to policymakers, at regional and national education conferences, and investigate ways to apply their research in their local schools and communities.

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[17] "the ones and twos" refers to two turntables.

Whether at weekend tournaments, public debates, or conferences, the institute aimed to equip participants with tools for developing and voicing their own researched views on pressing political, economic, social and cultural issues. Not only were students to develop an understanding of how these issues affected themselves and local and global communities, but also they were to learn about the importance of their own critical research and voice in creating solutions to these problems.

As an English educator, I wanted to create an institute that cultivated the language and literacies necessarily for academic achievement at a high school- *and* college-level as well as literacies necessary for navigating the world in the 21st century. To design the curriculum, I established learning objectives around academics and civic engagement. The academic learning objectives were derived from English language arts, state academic standards, and new literacies.

Academic literacy learning objectives. One of the goals of the workshop was to assist students in developing the language and literacies to succeed academically at a high school- *and* college-level. Toward that end, the objectives were for students to:

- Read widely, deeply, and critically across myriad informational and literary texts with comprehension.
- Write analytically, logically, critically, and creatively with skill by integrating multiple literacies and a wide-range of texts and information with the personal experiences and knowledge that students bring into the classroom.
- Listen and communicate effectively and responsibly in a variety of ways and settings.

- Know and apply core concepts and principles of civics, history, geography, arts, mathematics, physical and life sciences, and English language arts.
- Think analytically, logically, critically, and creatively to build knowledge, broaden worldviews, form reasoned judgments, and solve problems.
- Synthesize competing viewpoints into a well-reasoned argument for solving problems through research, developing evidence-based arguments, debating, and exploring multiple viewpoints regarding each issue.
- Understand the importance of hard work and how performance, effort and decisions directly affect future career, educational, and life opportunities.

All institute staff wanted to provide students with an unparalleled educational opportunity. As an English educator, I also wanted to create an institute that cultivated critically important, lifelong skills that were in line with state and national standards in English language arts, without teaching to the test. I wanted students to strengthen reading, writing, listening, and speaking while broadening worldviews and developing a life-long love for learning such that learning would not be reduced to passing a test, class, or getting a grade but would be seen as fun, functional, and invaluable because it was a ticket to travel to tournaments, win awards, and build friendships, and develop the capacity to defend and advocate for oneself and others.

Invested civic engagement learning objectives. Another goal of the institute was to foster literacies that students need to succeed in life and to function as active participants in a radical democracy. Toward this end the institute sought for students to:

- Develop mastery over multiple literacies and language to form reasoned judgments, solve problems, and think analytically, logically, critically, and creatively in consuming and producing knowledge.

- Develop mastery over language and problem solving skills to resolve conflict.
- Learn about legal, economic, social, and policy issues including the role of government, governmental processes and policies, civil rights, and economic and social inequalities, such that students develop a sense of what it means to be civically engaged in a socially responsible way.
- Develop the necessary academic and critical literacies to conduct original research in the service of social justice.
- Develop confidence and the ability to think quickly, and speak powerfully.
- Strengthen interpersonal skills and teamwork by working in teams during classes, practice debates and in preparation for weekend competitions.
- Function as part of a group not only by working in teams of two during tournaments, but also by working with their squad as a whole to research, strategize, practice debating, and prepare for tournaments.
- Develop positive relationships with peers and adults that students see on a weekly basis at after school meetings and weekend competitions.
- Exhibit leadership ability and demonstrate a commitment to civic engagement.

I then developed activities that mapped onto these learning objectives.

ILDI Program Components

The program featured four different services and activities which began in the summer of 2012:

- Student Recruitment, Engagement, and Service Accessibility. In order to recruit students, I collaborated with students, teachers and assistant coaches at high schools to identify potential participants. A good portion of the students were recruited at the after school debate center I created in the winter of 2011-2012 at the university.

- Summer Institute. Participants attended a summer debate institute at the Ivy League University. Throughout the day, participants attended workshops, seminars, and participated in practice debates. The workshop culminated in a public debate and community celebration.
- After School Meetings. Students attended weekly after-school classes during the school year taught by ILDI-affiliated instructors. Classes prepared debaters for national tournaments and encouraged students to hold public debates on pressing community issues and present at local and national academic conferences.
- National Tournaments. During the school year, ILDI-affiliated instructors travelled with high school participants to a number of national tournaments around the country where students debated against students from the nation's top private and affluent suburban schools. These weekend tournaments consisted of at least five 90-minute evidence-based debate "rounds" where the top teams and speakers receive awards. Weekend tournaments enabled students to practice voicing their own researched views on pressing political, economic, social and cultural issues.

Elements of Instruction

In Jim Burke's (2013) English methods guide for classroom teachers, he outlines 10 elements of instruction, which were reflected in the pedagogy of the institute:

Environmental support. We had to ensure that students had food, metro cards to pay for the city's buses and subways, classrooms, and the necessary technology to learn. At the beginning of the institute, I had to front money for food as we waited for funding to come through. As this was unanticipated, it was a challenge. During the first week, I also hadn't thought about how many students wouldn't have the funds for a round trip metro card to get to the institute. For some students, this meant that they didn't show up. After calling them and finding out that they needed a metro card, I covered the funds for a few students until an assistant principal managed to procure metro cards for several of the students.

Clear learning objectives. As indicated above, I created a number of learning objectives around academics and civic engagement. Additional objectives evolved after hearing from students about what they also hoped to get out of ILDI.

Make explicit connections. Classroom activities were designed to make connections between students' lives, big ideas, languages, sociocultural worlds, and pre-existing knowledge.

Preparation skills and background knowledge. In order to participate in the institute, students were required to submit an application, which helped faculty ascertain students' skill levels and background knowledge. However, this was a reflexive process throughout the institute. One example of providing the students with preparations skills for debating was making sure that the students had regular opportunities to practice speaking techniques. Nearly every day, students participated in speaking drills, which included practicing enunciation, pronunciation, cadence, and flow. Whenever students did a speaking drill (albeit this term sounds more like a military exercise, but the terminology is borrowed from debate. Given its common usage and students' familiarity with it, I chose to also use the term), the faculty responsible for conducting the exercise would also participate. As DP and Toni Hill would repeatedly remind the debaters, "Nobody is above or below it." When students saw their instructors slobber over a pen or writing instrument placed horizontally in their mouth and then read out loud for at least a minute at a time, with the pen still in their mouth (the "pen drill"), not only did this seem to make the students more comfortable with participating in the exercise, but because everyone looked and sounded ridiculously hilarious while doing it, the group practice made students laugh—a sure sign of the fun being had—and seemed to humanize the instructors and create more camaraderie.

Assessment. I administered a survey at the beginning of the institute to ascertain students' skill levels and their interests and assets. I used Google Docs to share these surveys along with the students' personal statements on their applications to ILDI, with all of the staff so we could tailor curricula and track students' learning and development throughout the institute. I also created opportunities for students to receive feedback and assess their own learning over time. Faculty discussed in meetings with each other and in meetings with students, student progress, challenges, and next steps. Video recordings provided another way for students and teachers to check progress. Additionally, all students were set up with access to a Dropbox folder in which faculty shared readings of interest, lecture notes, and videos of our classes, as well as students' speeches that students could review for self-assessment, and to track and make improvements. Students who missed a day could also review the videos of sessions from that day. We also used ballots for assessing debates. Teachers as well as the students who were not debating filled out these ballots, which were then returned to students participating in the debate at the end of the debate round. We used the same template each time (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Debate Ballot Used in Practice Rounds at ILDI.

Debate Ballot

Name: __________________________

Affirmative Team Members	**Negative Team Members**
1. ____________________	**1. _____________________**
2. ____________________	**2. _____________________**

The debate was won by the: AFFIRMATIVE NEGATIVE (circle one).

Reasons for my decision (give three):

1.____

2.____

3.____

The best speaker in the debate was:_________________________

The reason they were the best*: ____________________________________

Figure 5. Debate ballot used in practice rounds at ILDI.

Teaching strategies for learning. We taught student strategies for learning, including annotated bibliographies, research, time management, constructing cases, asking and answering questions, and how to give constructive feedback to peers.

Modeling. We modeled to demystify literacy practices through teacher demonstration debates and by modeling literacy practices and strategies like annotated bibliographies, note taking, judging, case construction, and research demonstrations.

Use different methods, modes and media. We watched online debates, utilized used SMART boards when available or a media console equipped with a PC connected to Wi-Fi, remote keyboard, projector, DVD/CD drive, and speakers for audio. We used Google Docs, Dropbox, and Facebook. Additionally, as many of our students' first language was Spanish, and out of the interest in drawing upon students' linguistic assets to check the accuracy of texts translated from Spanish into English, whenever possible, we included readings in both languages. After the institute, students continued to use Dropbox for sharing research and strategies against teams from other schools that our debaters would likely end up debating at tournaments.

Student-generated questions, ideas, interpretations and solutions. Students generated questions, ideas, interpretations and solutions through discussions, student lecture series, and via instructors encouraging students' questions during lectures, seminars and workshops.

Opportunities to practice, perfect and perform. We provided daily opportunities for students to practice, perfect and perform their writing, reading, speaking, and listening, through morning writing and speaking cyphers, reading workshops, fun mini-debates, practice rounds, tournaments, and public debates.

ILDI Summer of 2012 Institute Curriculum

Field note excerpt, July 14, 2012 – The Beginning of the Morning Cyphers

The students are busy having an informal discussion about how multiple social locations connect with Hip-Hop when David Peterson, aka DP, walks in. It is DP's first day at ILDI and the students are eager to meet this former coach of the Louisville Malcolm X Debate Project.

By way of an introduction, DP tells everyone that they need something to write with. "We're going to do an exercise. I'm gonna do it do. Nobody is above it or below it," DP says as a preface to the exercise but also to his teaching philosophy. The expression, "Nobody is above it or below it," caught on and was adopted by multiple instructors, including myself, as it reflected our belief in the importance of modeling, as well as creating a participatory classroom culture. Our hope was that as we showed our vulnerability as ever-growing readers, writers, and speakers—as all teachers are also learners in a continual process of refining literacies—that our students would be more willing to be vulnerable and participate more freely in discussions, activities and debates.

DP proceeds to unveil his philosophy of teaching and his orientation toward coaching young debaters at a debate camp that go beyond the "quantifiable things that you need to debate" like at the end of camp being able to "count how much cards we have, right, how many affirmative positions, how many neg[18] positions, right. Practical, quantifiable things that you need to debate, right." But beyond the easily quantifiable, DP says, "there's stuff that is less easy to imagine, right."

DP asks the debaters, "How many of you have been in a debate and the hour after the debate you're thinkin, 'shit, I should've said something?'" Mickey shoots up his hand and others are nodding that they can relate as DP elaborates:

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[18] "Neg" is short for negative.

> 'There was something that I should of said but I didn't say but I knew that thing that I could've said but I didn't say, I could've won if I would've thought about it right there.' So how do you figure out how to get out all of that in your head that you know? We all know stuff right? We're not computers. We can't just take stuff in our heads and print it to paper, but there's ways that we can practice to make it come out more smoothly—to stop the mental constipation, right.

The students laugh upon hearing DP refer to these moments that they all have experienced as "mental constipation." DP tells them that this morning writing cypher is a tool to help students think critically, make connections, and "get stuff out" rapidly given the fast-paced and timed-nature of debate rounds—skills that are "hard to measure"—but skills that the students will nonetheless need to deploy effectively when writing essays on timed-tests in school or for college entrance exams, not to mention when engaging in debates over the course of their life outside of the formal activity of competitive academic policy debate. Out of all of these skills, DP emphasizes the importance of critical thinking:

> That's what we gotta do. That's what debate is. But that's hard to measure at the end of six weeks. How am I learning to be quick, to think of things fast, to get stuff out? You only have a limited amount of prep time[19]. You have to write stuff fast, right. Or type stuff fast. So these things are hard to measure. Also critical thinking. Somebody makes an example. It's hard to measure your ability to make connections between all these things that are going on. Y'all have heard a judge's decision and they told you about all this stuff that they saw because they're just chillin. They're not in the debate so they can think about all these connections that you could've made. And you're like, damn, why didn't I make that connection, right? So that's what you have to focus on, this practical stuff. There's immediate stuff that needs to get done, but we have to slow down, take time out, and try to focus on critical thinking, getting our thoughts to come out. It might not seem directly relevant but it is alright.

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[19] Prep time refers to the timed preparation time that each team has to use over the course of one debate round. Usually teams have eight to ten minutes of time in total to both prepare responses to opponents' arguments and to further develop arguments that have already been presented.

DP seems to suspect that the students are suspicious of his strategy, which is why he tells them to have faith in an exercise that might not seem relevant to debate. DP also knows the debaters want to get down to business—they want to continue working on their research and debate cases. They want to debate. What is this writing exercise about? DP explains that the exercise is also a way for him to get to know the young scholars and for them to get to know him.

> So we're going to do this exercise that's going to help me introduce myself to you. It's going to help me get to know y'all. I mean I know Mickey from last year but I don't really know him. I don't really really know Mickey. I'm about to know Mickey a whole lot more in about 20 minutes when we're done with this. So this is the heading at the top of your paper. Just write down: Who am I? Where am I going? Who am I? Where am I going?

Seeing that the students are all writing down this prompt, DP clarifies, "Don't do anything with it yet. Just—who am I and where am I going? Who am I? Where am I going?" He explains what the students should expect and lays the ground rules for the activity—no censorship, no stopping writing until the time is up—and he tells them to fall back on the prompt if they can't think about anything to write because "We're trying to get a train of thought rolling. We don't want to get derailed."

> Alright, so this is what we are going to do. Usually, we could just go around and I could introduce myself and tell you about me and you could tell me about you, but we always censor ourselves. We always stop and think about what's the right thing to say, about what we should say. We gotta stop that. So we're going to do an exercise, maybe, eight minutes, alright. For eight minutes your pen is not allowed to stop writing, okay? It's called a freewrite. Your pen is just going to write. Whenever you can't think of something, you have to just keep on writing: Who am I? Where am I going? If you're writing something, instead of stopping and thinking, you just write. Who am I? Where am I going? Who am I? Where am I going? Until that thing comes to you and you keep going. I'm going to do it, too. Nobody's above or below it, right. I'm going to do the

> same thing, too. We're going to read it. Who am I? Where am I going? That's also the theme. That's also the topic, broadly conceived, however you think you can answer that question. Who am I, where am I going? Where am I going? Right. The transportation structure. We're trying to get a train of thought rolling. We don't want to get derailed.

"This is a tough room," DP remarks when the students don't acknowledge his transportation metaphor. The students appear apathetic. They don't know him, yet. They don't yet trust his methods. Again, they want to get down to business and the business isn't free writing. Recognizing this, DP reinforces the process.

> Who am I, where am I going? Your pen can't stop. Your pen can't stop once. You're trying to write. You're trying to answer this question however you want to answer this question. And you can't stop to think about what you should say next. It's always moving. Because the whole thing could just be, who am I, where am I going, over and over. But the point is that your pen can't stop moving, alright? You just gotta get it out. Let it all out. Whatever's in your head, just immediately, let it go. Is everybody about ready? So there's a lot of stuff that I want to do the next two weeks that's like this. To help us introduce ourselves and do a lot of other things. It might seem irrelevant and not relevant to debate but I'm telling you that it is. Alright. You're pen cannot stop moving. All right eight minutes on the clock, starts now.

The students begin writing without interruption. They are hunched over their notebooks or blank white paper, writing. Even for two debaters with laptop computers are writing with a pen and paper, too. Their pens don't stop moving for the entire eight minutes. I wrote. Chris Randall wrote. DP wrote. After two minutes DP said, "Keep goin." After four minutes he told everyone, "Four minutes," to signal four minutes remained to write. He gave a similar time signal at one minute. "15 seconds," DP signaled telling everyone to wrap up their thoughts.

"Do we have to share this?" asks John.

"That's what I said in the beginning," DP replies with an even and measured tone.

"No!" complains Mickey.

"How else am I going to know you? How else are you going to know me?" DP tries to convince the debaters. It's like pulling teeth.

John says, “I mean, I’ll share it but—“

“That’s your mid- to felony offense. What a traumatic event,” DP scolds John and Mickey for their reluctance.

“I can’t read this,” says Mickey.

“That’s the censorship. That’s the censorship,” DP reminds the debaters. Trying to persuade the stubborn ones, DP tried to reassure them by modeling and tells them, “I’ll even go first.”

Wendy, a high school senior sitting to the right of DP says quietly that she’ll go first.

“You want to go first?” DP confirms.

“Are we going to do this everyday?” Mickey interrupts in protest. To which DP replies, “There’s different prompts every time. Different questions.”

Mickey tells DP he has to go to the bathroom. DP ignores him and tells everyone “Everybody’s got to read.”

“I’ll go first,” says John, trying to shore up his reputation.

“You can go first,” DP points at Wendy who had already volunteered to go first. “But you gotta stand up.”

Wendy stands up while looking down, with her eyes glued to her writing on her desk. “It’s not really deep,” she qualifies as she picks up her paper.

“Yes it is,” replies DP.

> **Wendy:** Who am I, where am I going? I am hungry. I'm gonna eat something. Perhaps a falafel? A falafel? A falafel. I am a sick person at the moment. Honestly I’ve been sick since May. I'm going to blow my nose as soon as we’re done with this exercise. I am an awesome student, where is this going to take me, huh? I am an awesome—I know I am a person who believes in fate. I am probably going to go back to that fortuneteller to tell me where I’m going to go even. That woman is totally legit but that’s another story in itself. I’m going to Cali when I’m done with New York or at least for now for this affair. But I'm pretty chill but uptight. I’m going to blow my nose but I don’t like something getting

> thrown at me. I'm a person who values sleep. Where am I going with this? Am I a person, or not a person? I like people? Question mark? Or at least the company of smart people. Like dumb people, by dumb people I mean, well, ya dig? Well I don't know. Who am I? I am someone who's willing to learn. I'm hungry. I'm going to be a senior. Whatup! I, definitely have been watching too much Laguna Beach. It's going to be ridic. I am a person who really really needs to blow my nose. Mucus is coming out. (Everyone laughs). On every standardized exam or paper I ever wrote, I need to blow my nose. This is a problem. I'm going to become an ambassador to get one of those really awesome passports, among doing other things. Nose. Nose. It's 15 seconds before I can blow my nose and breathe again. Jesus.

Wendy's freewrite reveals some of the food she likes to eat, her health, her belief in faith and fortunetelling, her interest in going to California, her disposition, her love of sleep, her idiosyncratic language use, her grade level, her interest in popular culture, her feelings on standardized exams, and her ambition to become an ambassador. Just eight minutes of writing followed by orally sharing what she wrote, gave all of us a window into many things about Wendy.

"That was good," comments DP. "Now we know a little more about chu and your sinuses. That was great." Trying to raise the students' awareness about how to make improvements on delivery skills, DP adds, "The only thing about it was that your back was to everybody else—but that was my fault—everybody else who wants to see everybody. But that was really good. Who's next?"

Toussaint raises his hand and starts to stand up.

"Alright," says DP. "We need you up front so everybody can see you."

"It's a little scattered," Toussaint qualifies while flashing his broad and charming signature smile.

"It's supposed to be scattered," DP answers reassuringly.

Once Toussaint is positioned in the front of the room facing his high school colleagues, Toussaint begins:

> Well who am I and where am I going? I am Toussaint. I don't think I know myself, or know myself well enough to tell you who I am or where I'm going. But one thing that I can tell you is that I am *different*. *Different* than what people perceive me to be. Different from what people think. *Different* from what people think I'm supposed to be. I don't think I'm above anybody but I don't think I have to follow along with mainstream thought. I am Toussaint from Haiti and came here when I was three years old. Growing up I didn't think society could *define me*—that I was already defined. I *hate* parties. I *hate* noisy places. I *hate* racist jokes, but I laugh at them sometimes.

Students chuckle upon hearing that last line. Toussaint looks up from his paper and clarifies "Family Guy," (an animated sit-com) just in case some didn't get the reference.

> People call me boring, lame. But just because I have respect for myself and don't go along with mainstream *shit* that happens with the world or my teenage life. I *hate* when people judge me because I'm a virgin, because I'm in the *debate team*, because I'm an immigrant, because I *respect myself*. I can tell you a little about who I am but not certain parts I don't know, like—what's my *favorite* color or what's my *favorite show*—certain things that I am just indifferent about. I don't fully know myself, but I definitely know that I'm not going to *jail* or selling *drugs* on the *street*. Uh, I know that I'm going to be in a space where I could be *angry*, where I could be like, you know, *fight back,* and like where I could probably beat the *debate community* or some *shit* like that. But I don't know. I'm just Toussaint.

In eight minutes Toussaint shares that he is different than what he says mainstream society expects him to be as a young Black immigrant from Haiti: not a partier, someone who respects himself, a virgin, on the debate team, who won't be "going to jail" or "selling drugs on the street." And while he is someone who is still growing and learning about himself, he expects that he will find himself in situations that will make him angry and inspire him to "fight back," which might be inside the debate community.

Following her brave colleagues' lead, Maria enters the cypher.

> Who am I? Where am I going? My name is Maria. I'm a 17-year-old Chicana. I currently attend Hillary High School and I'm going to be a senior. This is my third official year debating and I'm hoping to make the most of it. Who am I? Where am I going? On my spare time I love to play soccer. I love playing it because it's my favorite sport. Who am I? Where am I going? Who am I? Where am I going? Who am I? Where am I going? I've also been playing soccer for three years and hope to play it in college, as well. Who am I? Where am I going? I'm not sure of where life will take me but I want to go to college and become a lawyer and an English teacher.

Maria looks up, smiles, then laughs and bites her lower lip, perhaps in recognition of how ambitious she is given that she has chosen two different professions.

> Who am I? Where am I going? I like tacos, Converse, Facebooking, taking pictures, writing, reading, and debating. I'm always keeping myself occupied by doing many activities, so much that my mom even gets mad for me doing it. But it's cool. I love it and I love the things I do. Now, who am I? Where am I going? I was born and raised in [the northern borough] and I've never travelled to Mexico—I know that's crazy. I don't really leave home because my mother is really overprotective but I do like to go out with my friends and enjoy myself. Debate has allowed for me to make so many friends but most of all it's allowed for me to meet amazing people, the folks I'll know for the rest of my life. I never thought I'd ever find people who'd be as crazy as I and spend all of their time doing things like research and work. But yeah, I don't know what else to say. I love fried chicken and apparently I have a competitor because Mickey seems to love it even more. I could cook chicken and turkey and a whole bunch of crazy stuff but I can't cook rice. It's just one of the many things that no one can really explain but that's just me.
>
> Everyone claps as Maria sits down.
>
> John remarks, "You needed a little more water than you had for the rice."

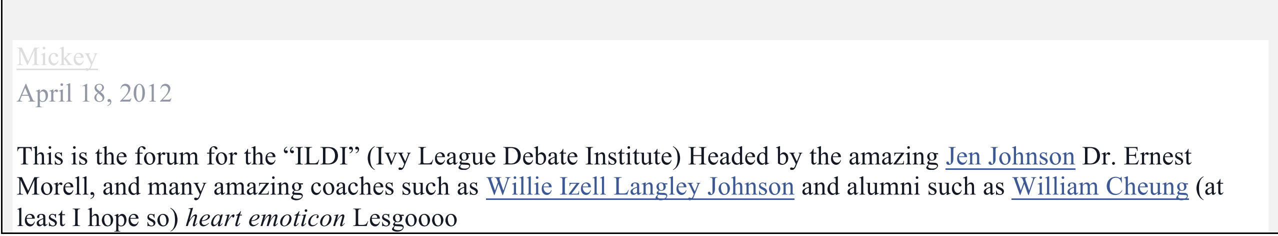
One by one, as the students and faculty shared and responded to one another—some blending Spanish with English, while others meshing various vernaculars with Dominant American English—they all demonstrated something about their interests, how they used language and literacies, and revealed something that either no one knew about them thus far, but something that they wanted everyone to know, or they shared something that established a connection that they had with one another, as was the case when Maria shared about her feelings around debate and whether she or Mickey liked fried chicken more.

As the institute progressed, and even after DP left, we continued doing the morning cypher. And, as time went on, there was less reluctance and more enthusiasm for the activity, as the students enjoyed sharing their writing with each other and realized that what they wrote could be incorporated into their debate cases as introductions, interludes, or as parts of verses. When the students experienced "mental constipation" they now had a tool "get the stuff out" and transform their felt *sense* into words through the process of writing (Elbow, 1981/1988), which could evolve into original compositions laden with meaning, authenticity, and purpose—transporting critical research in the interest of social justice—a process fueled by flexibility with form and function and with freedom to choose the tools from a well-stocked kit with many language varieties, literacies, and textual forms.

While the cypher in this example is around DP's prompt that he designed in the spirit of the transportation topic, the activity itself is something that any teacher outside of debate could do with students by adjusting the writing and cypher time to fit within the needs of the class, and altering the prompt and possible accompanying texts, such that the activity can reflect the course lesson and be broad enough to leave room for the exploration and use of multiple literacies, preexisting and new knowledge, everyday and dominant languages, along with students' sociocultural worlds, funds of knowledge, interests, and passions. To contextualize the prompt, a teacher could select a video clip from the morning's news broadcast on DemocracyNow! (democracynow.org) with the prompt: "We better be the change we seek;" or pair a song, like Tupac's "Changes" (Shakur, 1998, disc 2, track 5) with a writing prompt adapted from a bar in the song like "Learn to see me as a brother (or sister or cousin) instead of two distant strangers;" or play Kendrick Lamar's, "i" (Lamar, 2015, track 15), with: "I am/you are/they are/we are (depending on what makes sense) the rose that grows from concrete;" or couple an excerpt from the 2014 documentary on Nas, *Time is Illmatic*, with the prompt: "If I ruled the world, what would I do?;" or use an excerpt from a song, poem, or video, comic, or essay produced or selected by a student in the class (if the student's original production, use with their permission) and write a prompt with that student; or have a group of students trade off selecting the text and/or prompt. There are infinite combinations to suit the needs of any education setting; and, there are several benefits for integrating this practice. Students are able to get consistent practice writing without pressure to conform to a particular style, and with the freedom to use language as they desire. Students get practice in oral language, as they orally present what they have written, which also provides a window into students' interests, aspirations, concerns, and at times, their state of mind. And, as students are encouraged to keep a journal of everything they write (which could also be a audiovisual journal if a teacher and student wants to audio or video record the cypher), students can draw on these artifacts as resources for future assignments, and as a reflection on their own language and literacy development, writing process, and their process of discovery through language (Murray, 1972/2009).

In much the same way that the morning cypher became institutionalized in our day-to-day affairs, the schedule as a whole was co-generated with ILDI faculty from the beginning until the institute's end via phone calls, Google Docs, and face-to-face conversations when faculty were together. Faculty followed conversations on the Institute's Facebook page created by Mickey (see Figure 6) to ascertain students' interests and scholarly needs. Faculty also used Facebook and the Institute's Dropbox folder (which is still up and running as of 2015) to post relevant historical, theoretical, empirical texts and lecture notes for students to read. When available, faculty provided both Spanish and English versions of texts and encouraged Spanish speakers to read both versions to check for clarity in translations and also to develop the most nuanced understanding of the text.

Figure 6. Mickey's Facebook post to ILDI students and instructors, announcing the ILDI's Facebook group page.



Mickey
April 18, 2012

This is the forum for the "ILDI" (Ivy League Debate Institute) Headed by the amazing Jen Johnson Dr. Ernest Morell, and many amazing coaches such as Willie Izell Langley Johnson and alumni such as William Cheung (at least I hope so) *heart emoticon* Lesgoooo

Figure 6. Mickey's Facebook post to ILDI students and instructors, announcing the ILDI's Facebook group page.

Each day consisted of lectures, large group discussions, and small group breakout sessions. We also built in two to three hours of study, writing, and research time into the schedule. Most mornings had a lecture followed by study and reading time. Reading, writing, research and practice time included teachers meeting with students individually or in groups working in classrooms or in the library, providing the faculty with another opportunity to integrate assessment and accountability. After lunch there was another lecture followed by more time for studying, writing and research. The goal was to break up the lectures so that students would have time to process the information and compliment it with their own independent work, with opportunities to approach the faculty for individual assistance. After dinner we often had practice debates. For the practice debates, those not debating judged using the same template to assist with self-assessment and growth. Homework often included reading, annotating articles, synthesizing research into mini-essays that would later provide the foundation for the students' debate cases. (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Sample Day at ILDI 2012

DemocracyNow!
Announcements
Morning cypher
Speaking drills
Morning lecture
Reading, writing, research, and practice time
Lunch
Afternoon lecture/seminar
Reading, writing, research, and practice time
Dinner
Practice debates
Homework

Figure 7. Sample day at ILDI 2012.

Throughout the Institute we designed activities to reflect students' interests, faculty fields of expertise, and agreed-upon course content. We had morning writing and speaking cyphers, seminars on critical theories including Black and Chicana feminism, queer theory, Black liberation theology, deconstructionism, postcolonialism, and everything you ever wanted to know (or didn't want to know) about philosophers like Michel Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari. We had topic-related seminars centered around empirical research on transportation, social movements, and debate theory. Augmenting the content were a wide-variety of skills-based seminars around argument construction, research, cross-examination, debating without evidence, note taking or "flowing," rebuttals, and rhetorical strategies. Students also had to use their research to deliver camp-wide lectures in a series called "The Student Lecture Series" in which students delivered an individually researched lecture with visuals, lasting for around 30 minutes.

Documenting the Institute through film was a constant reality. The recent high school graduates/ILDI Fellows were the ones who were responsible for filming, but on occasion, one of the high school students could be found taking over or adjusting the lens to face the person speaking. Everyone knew that there were several reasons for videotaping: documentary and archival; review and assessment; training; and curricular coordination. The goal was to upload and share the videos daily with all participants and upcoming instructors. The videos were meant to function as a method of review and assessment for the attendees, a way for anyone absent to catch up, and as a mechanism to update the faculty who would be teaching in the upcoming weeks. While this was, in my opinion, an excellent idea, the follow-through fell short. There simply was not enough person-power available to upload everything (albeit this is something that could be planned for in the future, now knowing how time-consuming this process is). Uploads were intermittent. Videos were nonetheless preserved and many were shared after the institute (some were in higher demand than others, which dictated the priority of uploads).

The first chunk of the institute laid the theoretical framework for the institute. By providing time to read literature on transportation infrastructure and having group discussions, we created forums in which students could make connections between the content and their lived experiences. Out of this, students were supported in creating individual cases.

Day one included a topic lecture by Dr. Shanara Reid-Brinkley on the 2012-2013 national debate resolution: *Resolved the United States federal government should substantially increase its transportation infrastructure investment in the United States*, for which the students received the preface and introduction to a collection of case studies presented in *Highway Robbery: Transportation Racism and New Routes to Equity* (Bullard, Johnson & Torres, 2004) for the afternoon reading session on transportation inequality. The topic lecture was followed by an initial brainstorm on the topic and then the students broke for lunch (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. ILDI Class Brainstorm on the 2012-2013 National High School Policy Debate Topic.

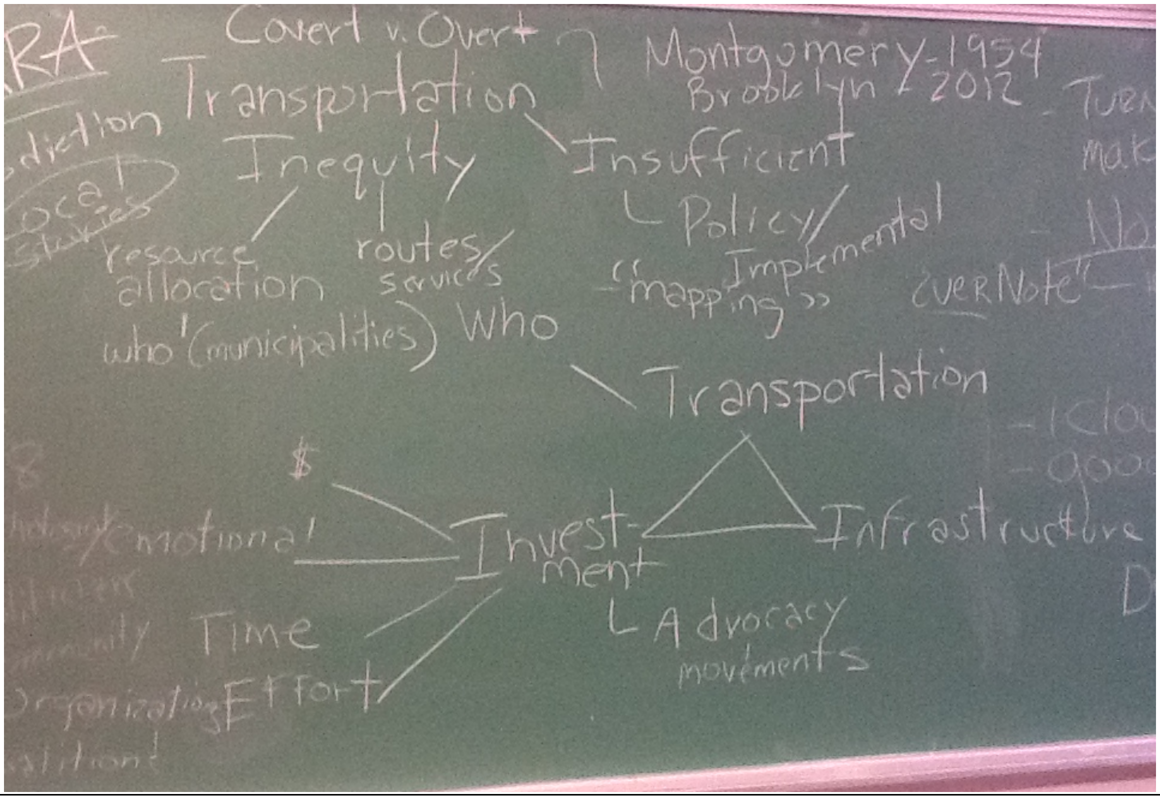

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Figure 8. ILDI class brainstorm on the 2012-2013 national high school policy debate topic.

The afternoon session on the first day of ILDI began with a reading session. For all reading sessions, students and faculty read some of the same texts at the same time such that students and faculty could have a substantive and detailed conversation around the text. This gave the faculty an opportunity to assess what the students were gleaning from the texts, what they were bringing to the texts, and what ideas were bubbling up that could be leveraged in support the young scholars' in developing their individual research. For example, out of that first discussion, we could tell that Terrance was showing particular interest in researching transportation inequalities around class and race.

> **Terrance**: I guess like two things on page five on the automobile section. Like one, that it addresses like the amount of spending that they uh spent—was it page five?
> **DSRB**: Mmhmm
> **Terrance**: They spend a lot more money on the road systems, like where cars go, than they do on the subway system where a lot more people ride the subway than they actually do on cars because uh wealthier, higher and middle class people actually ride the cars. And the second card, the last sentence where people of color are trying to use non automotive modes—
> **DSRB**: —of travel.
> **Terrance**: Like walking and riding a bike to work. Like if this is mostly what they use, then we're the only ones who are getting sidetracked because not even the middle or higher class people are actually using it. It's always the lower class people so we shouldn't be getting less money out of it.

At times the students raised questions or asked for more detailed information about something they were reading. We took that as an opportunity not to spoon-feed them answers, but to encourage them to practice researching and learning how to find answers to questions independent of us:

> **John**: Y'all are having a conversation about how segregation occurs and what not and I guess this is a little out of topic and I guess this is going to be a different lecture but I just want to talk and get deeper on the T21 thing and the ISTEA thing. I want to explore a topic specific affirmative that we can…I just want to know more about it.
> **DSRB**: Okay find out about it and report back. (John smiles)
> **DSRB**: Who are you? You are a young *scholar*. Find that out. Bring it back.

While DSRB asked John to research more about T21 and ISTEA, she also took his question as an opportunity to model a closer reading of the text that could simultaneously provide entry into a deeper conversation around policy making that could be connected to the young scholars' interests and what they said they saw on a daily basis around how current transportation infrastructure in the United States seemed to be missing something fundamental about the way in which inequalities can be magnified as support for transportation infrastructure increased:

> **DSRB**: Let me read you this quote. So there's this quote on page six, the second paragraph where they are talkin about what John is talkin about, the Intermodal Transportation Efficiency Act, which was an act our government passed to try to deal with these social justice issues in public transportation. So that act was designed to improve issues like 'air quality, energy conservation and mobility' for a certain class of people like the elderly or people with disabilities, 'the economically disadvantaged in urban and rural areas.' So the federal government has passed policies to sort of deal with this sort of inequity. Um, but just because the Feds pass policies on anything does not really mean that anything really happens. The reason I want to read this line out of the second paragraph is because I think that it demonstrates what the problem is with taking a topical plan action of increasing mass or public transportation to resolve these issues that we just got done talking about: 'ISTEA and TEA-21 change the way federal transportation dollars are allocated, ensuring greater *local* control over what is funded and not funded.' *There is the problem*, right, for an affirmative at the *federal* level with these issues at the local level. Because we can write, you can write a *whole* 1AC, right, about *inequity*, *racism*, *poverty*, and this is not *okay*; the federal government *must* act; we should give some investment funds to the states. So you can give some funds to the states, what are the states going to do with it? Right. The states are going to use it to better the part of transportation system that equal more affluent white riders, right. And it still meets the criteria of the aff[20] for the federal government legislation that you passing. They have increased public transportation in inner city areas, right. What it will do is increase transportation in the inner cities where White people are, or rich people in the inner city. So it's not just about *passing the legislation*, it's about what do the people who are in charge of distributing the funds. How do they *make* decisions about what is *most important* for the city? And since we've already decided, right, that certain bodies are disposable, right, those are not going to be the first people to gain access to the funds. So the 1AC fed[21] action might sound *wonderful*, but our argument is that the way that this operates in the status quo and the way that this operates empirically, than that money will not make it to the populations who most need it.
> **John**: You just reminded me. There's a posta on like every train I guess. I see it on the D train because that's the one I take. That says connecting the Long Island expressway I think it is, some Long Island train, with Grand Central, connecting like 400,000 people, something like that. It just made me realize it's true because who lives in Long Island? Not me.
> **DSRB**: Exactly.

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[20] Aff is short for affirmative. Neg is short for negative. In this case, DSRB is referring to the affirmative case.

[21] "Fed" is being used here as an abbreviation for federal government"

> **Chris**: There is also some solvency take-outs here. Like people got millions of dollars from FEMA for Katrina, but look at what happened with that? In New Orleans, apparently they sent supplies. Good luck with that. They also built trailers.
> **DSRB**: Good luck with that, too. Mmmhhm.
> **Chris**: That every time policies are supposed to be for racial minorities that it always gets coopted or screwed up in some kind of way.
> **Willie**: It's more of a question of whose in charge of distributing—of like who's in charge of like allocating.
> **DSRB:** Who implements the plan is very important.
> **Jen**: And who is behind them, too because there are political interests, right? There are people who are contributing to an individual's campaigns, right?
> **Terrance**: I understand the argument that like when you fund for things how the money is allocated, because that has disadvantages in itself. So like what would be the means—what would be the plan? What would be the alternative advocacy, like a boycott?

In this first conversation around the text *Highway Robbery*, the young scholars are discussing whether or not a government policy at the federal level will be responsive to the unique needs of different locals, especially high poverty areas with large numbers of people of color given the history of transportation inequalities along racial and class lines. While there are no doubt some over-generalizations being made about the efficacy of policy reforms intended to be in the service of racial minorities, which many could disagree with, these claims nonetheless represent a particular point of view that some debaters would incorporate into their debate rounds. For many, this incorporation is a strategic decision given how almost all but one national high school policy debate topic since 1977 has included the United States federal government in the wording of the resolution as the implied agent of change. By calling into question an affirmative team's agent of change, in this case the U.S. federal government, debaters can follow with arguments that cast doubt on the overall efficacy of the affirmative's proposed policy and its ability to solve the problems that the affirmative claims to fix, causing their entire case to unravel. When debaters would make this argument in their debate round, however, they would not just make the claim without heavily backing it up with researched evidence about the failure of past governmental reforms. Regardless of whether or not one agrees with an argument any debater is making, the debaters nonetheless have to consider all sides of an argument in order to be prepared to debate it. Additionally, what is happening in the exchange around *Highway Robbery*, is a lively discussion around a text that inspires the debaters to develop ideas for cases they are interested in researching, creating, refining, and debating. As the young scholars participated in practice rounds at the institute, they were reminded by instructors that they must thoroughly defend all claims that they make, and to be especially careful of ones that might contain logical fallacies, for which others could easily call out as such and use as counter-arguments.

During the above discussion, John and Terrance dropped seeds for what would later develop into two well-researched, evidence-based, and multimodal debate cases and speeches. For Terrance, it would be his and Jay's case *Reparations*, which I will detail later in this chapter. For John and Mickey, it would be *Cultural Infusion,* which became *No Child Left Behind* in its next iteration, which became *Pa'Lante* when they debated at weekend tournaments during the 2012-2013 school year.

Even at times when a conversation would shift and seem to be off-topic, we saw that as a potentially revealing moment that could uncover something equally valuable about who the young scholars' were, what they cared about, and how the young scholars were thinking and synthesizing what they were learning. Something seemingly off-topic, could really be a powerful window into future possibilities for teaching and learning.

> **Chris**: if you're around Black people by ourselves we talk totally different than how White people talk. White people come in the room and the whole conversation changes. Even as debaters. When you walk into the room and I'm sittin there you like we gonna have a functionally different debate with me.
> **John**: Yeah! Yep. That is *so true*. Like take the Two train at like 42nd street right and take it all the way to Jackson street in the [northern borough], you will see such a shift.

In debate training and in debate rounds there is always a combination of speaking, reading and writing. As students take texts and interpret them through discussions and annotations, they develop new understandings of the texts and topics at hand. In high school debate, similar to Heath's (1992) Trackton residents,

> there are repeated metaphors, comparisons, and fast-pasted, overlapping language as Trackton residents move from print to what it means in their lives. On some occasions, they attend to the text itself; on others, they use it only as a starting point for wide-ranging talk. On all occasions, they bring in knowledge related to the text and interpret beyond the text for their own context; in so doing, they achieve a new synthesis of information from the text and the joint experiences of community members. (pp. 200-201).

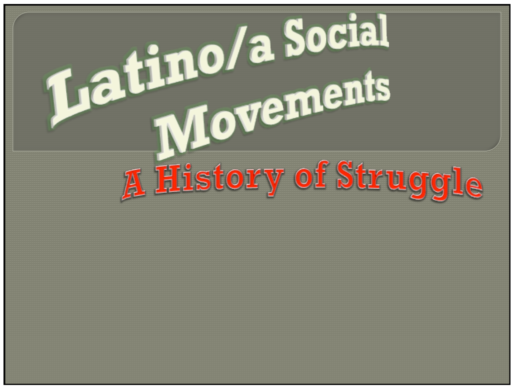
On the second day, we had students do background research and select a topic for their student-led lecture series on different social movements from which the scholars could draw to create their own ideas for change and assuming the responsibility of teaching their peers and the faculty. Five days after the lectures were assigned, John and Mickey presented a multimodal presentation on Ernesto Che Guevara (see Figure 9) and Latin@ social movements, fully loaded with information from myriad informational texts complemented with vivid illustrations on PowerPoint slides (see Figure 10). Everyone was in attendance as the students loved to learn from each other.

Figure 9. John's Introduction to His ILDI Student-Lecture on Che.

My lecture is going to be about Ernesto Che Guevara. He was a revolutionary from Argentina is it? Sorry, yeah, Argentina. Well, first I have a quote from someone reading him, it says: 'Despite his wide reading in leftist literature, it would probably be more accurate to describe the young Che Guevara as a cultural rebel more than anything else. Although deeply opposed to class injustice, he had not really developed a systemic understanding of a capitalist system, nor how to overthrow it.'This is just a criticism by him, I mean *from* him, sorry, *of* him. Uh, in his time period. Now we have to understand that we have to know who he was first before we can actually get down to the get down (Maria suppresses a smile), I guess to what actually happened in Cuba. He was born on May 14, 1928, to um, Argentinian parents. They weren't uh, very high class. He was born in Santa Fe Argentina and he died in '67, uh, meaning that he was 39. He also died in Bolivia, which is a good, um, um, setting of where he ended up in life. He studied in—he studied in the University of Buenos Aires in '53. Now the University of Buenos Aires is very important to him (Mickey is nodding in agreement) because he was studying medicine at the time which frames everything that he sees in life and how he frames all of the oppression that he ends up seeing because, um, what he did, um along the '50s is he and his friend were dedicated to seeing Latin America and exploring it. Now they are very naive on this.

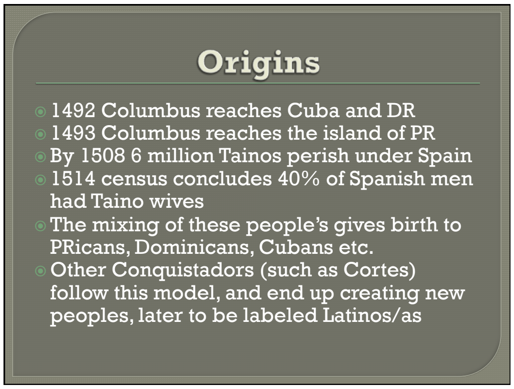
Figure 9. John's introduction to his ILDI student-lecture on Che.

Figure 10. Selected Slides from Mickey's PowerPoint Presentation



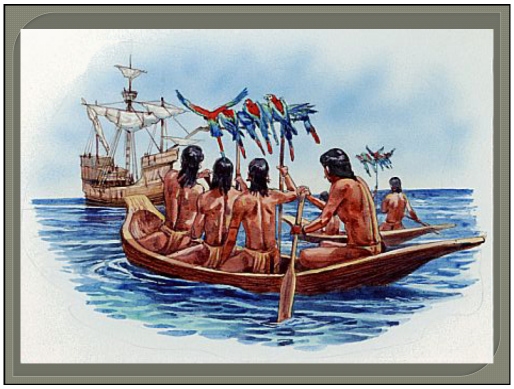
Latino/a Social Movements

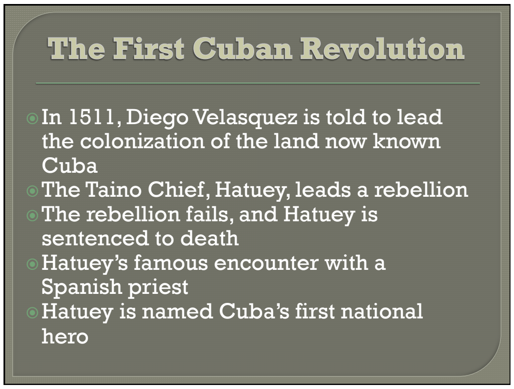
A History of Struggle



Origins

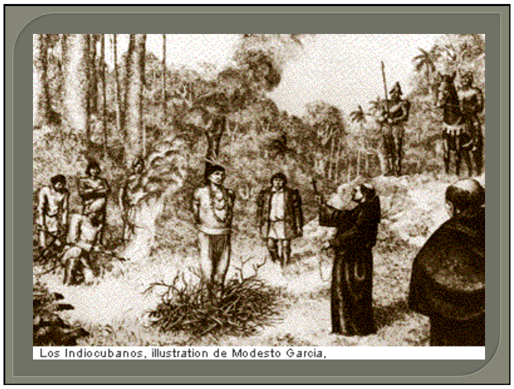
- 1492 Columbus reaches Cuba and DR
- 1493 Columbus reaches the island of PR
- By 1508 6 million Tainos perish under Spain
- 1514 census concludes 40% of Spanish men had Taino wives
- The mixing of these people's gives birth to PRicans, Dominicans, Cubans etc.
- Other Conquistadors (such as Cortes) follow this model, and end up creating new peoples, later to be labeled Latinos/as



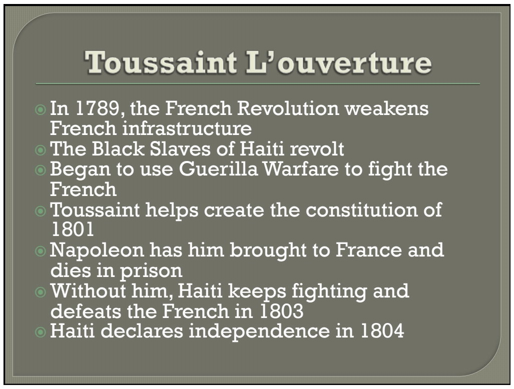


The First Cuban Revolution

- In 1511, Diego Velasquez is told to lead the colonization of the land now known Cuba
- The Taino Chief, Hatuey, leads a rebellion
- The rebellion fails, and Hatuey is sentenced to death
- Hatuey's famous encounter with a Spanish priest
- Hatuey is named Cuba's first national hero



Los Indiocubanos, illustration de Modesto Garcia,



Toussaint L'ouverture

- In 1789, the French Revolution weakens French infrastructure
- The Black Slaves of Haiti revolt
- Began to use Guerilla Warfare to fight the French
- Toussaint helps create the constitution of 1801
- Napoleon has him brought to France and dies in prison
- Without him, Haiti keeps fighting and defeats the French in 1803
- Haiti declares independence in 1804

Figure 10. Selected slides from Mickey's PowerPoint presentation.

Over the course of eight weeks, we provided consistent opportunities for the students to apply and practice the new skills that they were learning. To this end we also had a number of other enrichment activities. We took a field trip to the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, where students learned about the archive and had a special meeting with Martha Diaz, the founding director of the Hip-Hop Education Center who was curating the largest collection of Hip-Hop documentaries in the world that she had recently donated to the Schomburg. Recent high school graduates came in to do workshops, including E-Lusion and Fatality who did a two-part series they titled "Dance Revolution" in which they demonstrated the way in which they incorporated Hip-Hop dance, emceeing, and deejaying into their debating.

We also had ILDI Fellows, who initially were students who had just graduated from high school that summer, who shadowed ILDI faculty as part of a parallel apprenticeship in which they were being trained as future instructors. Fellows also functioned as teaching assistants, video documentarians, and helped with administrative duties. At the end of the sixth week of the 2012 summer institute, six of the high school debaters who were among the group of varsity debaters, or ILDI Scholars, participating in ILDI, became Fellows who taught a new class of novice debaters the last two weeks.

The first six weeks of the summer institute was only open to high school students who were varsity-level debaters—the Scholars track. The last two weeks of the eight-week summer institute, was when a cohort of novice debaters would join ILDI, but on a separate track taught by Willie Johnson, a college debate coach for a consortium of college debaters from several of the universities in the city. With only one instructor for the two-week novice workshop, when I received over 20 applications I was concerned I would have to turn some students away in order to maintain the desired low student-teacher ratio. When I told this to the Scholars, several of them said that it was unacceptable to turn anyone away who wanted to learn; for if we, the ILDI faculty, really believed in "each one, teach one" (as the instructors had been stressing in encouraging the Scholars to help teach each other and pass on what they have learned to the novices at their school during the school year), then we needed to believe our Scholars could help out. After six weeks of training at ILDI, the Scholars said they could serve as additional instructors. In volunteering to teach the novices in the two-week institute so I did not have to turn down any applicant, Maria, Mickey, and John were among a core group of high school students who demonstrated their commitment to ensuring that their peers cultivated literacies of access and liberation. In an email Mickey sent me as part of an effort to raise funds for the city's UDL from Chase Bank (an effort organized by another high school debater at the Institute whose mom worked at Chase Bank), he wrote about the significance of debate in his life academically, ontologically, and civically, that he wanted other young men like himself to have the opportunity to experience, as well:

> *The activity of debate allows me to fulfill certain goals in life that I would have never dreamed of. It allows me to ascertain a certain level of sophistication and political maturity which would never be expected of a person like me. Without debate I would be just like every other teenager in high school, not caring about my grades, probably filling the stereotype of a racially-mixed boy who comes from a single-parent household. Debate allowed me to reclaim my sense of self, and understanding that I am more than just a random 16 year-old who will end up not going to college and working hard the rest of my life. Instead of being that kid, I have had the opportunity to increase my philosophical rhetoric, interaction with political figures, and gain a deeper appreciation for civic participation within our democratic society. For people from Chase Bank to help us construct our debate program further, it would give teenagers who would not otherwise have a chance for success, or even be able go to college, a chance to become a leader in our society.*
> *Sincerely,*
> *Mickey*
> *7/6/12*

While it is a counterfactual to say that Mickey would have had a completely different trajectory had he not debated, and my reservations with redemption, turn-around, or savior narratives, notwithstanding, Mickey credits debate for helping him develop academic and critical literacies such that he is able to "fulfill certain goals in life that [he] would have never dreamed of" given the stereotypes around the life possibilities for a "racially-mixed boy who comes from a single-parent household." Mickey cared about his grades and expected to go to college. He was exploring "philosophical rhetoric" increasing his "interaction with political figures" (I believe that by the time Mickey wrote this he had just connected with some of the founding members of the New York chapter of the Puerto Rican Young Lords) and he was able to "gain a deeper appreciation for civic participation within our democratic society" giving him a "chance to become a leader in our society."

Throughout the summer, Mickey and his peers continued to share what they were learning with others beyond their immediate peer group. Half way through the Institute, I received a call from a professor at the University who asked me if our debaters would be willing to conduct a demonstration debate for her class of preservice teachers of English attending summer classes at the University. I relayed the message to the young scholars and Maria, Mickey, John, and Terrance volunteered for the debate, as they believed it was necessary to find other platforms to share their visions for improving education in schools with new teachers. Given the controversy over the use of Hip-Hop education and the significance of Hip-Hop culture among the youth in their schools, the young scholars invited Toni Hill, one of the Hip-Hop and R&B teaching artists on faculty at the Institute, to do an introduction to a demonstration debate that the young scholars hosted for the preservice teaches on the pros and cons of using Hip-Hop in education to help the teachers become more informed on Hip-Hop culture and some of the issues based on empirical research and relevant theories. In addition to working on their individual debate cases for the 2012-2013 national debate topic on transportation, the young scholars increased their research, reading, and writing load by diving into literature around Hip-Hop education. As many of the young scholars were Hip-Hop practitioners, from producers to emcees, Hip-Hop was a major aspect of the curriculum that summer. The ILDI faculty were committed to meeting students where they were at and provide an opportunity for them to strengthen their practice in Hip-Hop and build upon and extend those assets such that the young scholars could be more conversant in multiple discourses.

Hip-Hop *Reparations*

One case, *Reparations*, written by Terrance and Jay that developed over the course of the 2012 summer apprenticeship is indicative of the critical importance of race and Hip-Hop in the debaters' scholarly pursuits, the linguistic and cultural dexterity and plurality of the students' textual productions (Paris, 2009), as well as mutually affirming and hybrid literacies in which home and community literacies and practices—in this case Hip-Hop culture in particular—are combined with dominant school literacies and practices (Gutiérrez, 2008). The speech begins with an audio clip of Harlem-born poet, Sekou Sundiata, performing his poem, *Come on and Bring the Reparations*, on Def Poetry Jam, which is followed by an audio excerpt of a Hip-Hop song, *W-4,* by dead prez, both of which provide the framing for the rest of the debaters' argument which includes analytical essays, a hook that the debaters wrote and pre-recorded using a a microphone that I checked out from the University's media services and a music mixing and recording program that the debaters found online and downloaded, student-researched academic evidence, and Jay's original raps (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Reparations Debate Case Outline

(Adapted from the Table of Contents the debaters provided at the top of their written text.)

1. Poem *Come on and bring the Reparations* by Sekou Sundiata
2. *W-4* by dead prez

3. Student Analytical Writing
4. Hook/Chorus (Student-Written and Pre-Recorded using UGK's *International Players Anthem*)
5. Student-Researched Academic Evidence
6. Original Raps
7. Hook/Chorus

Figure 11. Reparations debate case outline.

The first "essay" portion (see Figure 12)—the "1st Break," as the debaters titled it—begins with a historical overview of race, class, gender and their significance in relation to the transportation topic. Fore fronting the salience of intersectionality (Combahee River Collective, 1978; Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989), and simultaneously reflecting on the color-, gender-, and class-blind affirmatives that had already been produced at debate camps around the country, Jay exclaims, "It *amazes me* that we can look at this topic and *not formulate* some *ideas*, regarding the intersections of *race*, *class*, *gender*, *age*, and other identities that are *forever undermined* in the political arena [and] in school." Then Jay locates his and Terrance's ethnic and racial identities in the context of their argument and details the relationship between transportation and oppression for myriad ethnic and racial groups over time.

Figure 12. The First Essay in Reparations Debate Case

The topic that this year presents us with puts a sole focus on transportation infrastructure. It amazes me that we can look at this topic and not formulate some ideas, regarding the intersections of race, class, gender, age, and other identities that are forever undermined in the political arena, in school, and now in so many debate discussions and rounds.

Africans were transported off of their land, transported through the middle passage and wound up as black, African Americans, subhuman railroad workers in this land we call America.

The indigenous were transported away from their land by force and told they would stay on reservations only to be transported off of that too.

The Chinese immigrants came and were forced to work on the railroad. Woman transported from queens to property.

Terrance's Panamanians built a canal for transportation and America buys it for 100 years.

My Puerto Ricans have been claimed as a territory and nothing more.

Figure 12. The first essay in Reparations debate case.

This ethnic studies-based historical analysis of transportation is followed by an advocacy (see Figure 13) in which the young scholars explain the stakes involved in the way that “History continuously writes and rewrites this novel of oppression” for Black and Brown bodies. They imply that in order to rewrite the metaphorical novel’s ending, they “take a steady view on the Black body” in debate, but not for the game of debate because they say, “This is our life.” Consequently, Jay and Terrance argue that

> the judge should vote for the team that best challenges the underlying assumptions of oppression embedded in transportation infrastructure. We endorse a reparations movement for the Black body that that has been perpetually transported till this minute and still have nothing to show for it and we know we are not the only ones. Therefore, we demand the USFG[22] pay the public transportation fare for the Black body for 10 years.

Figure 13. *Advocacy* of Reparations Debate Case

History continuously writes and rewrites this novel of oppression. But today, we take a steady view on the Black body. This is not a metaphor. This is not a joke. This is not a game. This is our life. Terrence and I believe that the judge should vote for the team that best challenges the underlying assumptions of oppression embedded in transportation infrastructure. We endorse a reparations movement for the Black body that that has been perpetually transported till this minute and still have nothing to show for it and we know we are not the only ones. Therefore, we demand the USFG pay the public transportation fare for the Black body for 10 years. Let the ballot serve as a mechanism of affirmation of our movement. Bring on the reparations.

Figure 13. Advocacy of Reparations debate case.

This advocacy is followed by a prerecorded hook (see Figure 14) that debaters recorded at ILDI and engineered using the beat from *International Players Anthem*, a song by UGK, the Hip-Hop duo made up of Bun B and the late Pimp C:

Figure 14. The Hook (Chorus) to Reparations Debate Argument

Africans to Black
Built the world on our backs

---

[22] United States federal government.

Reparations what we need
Make us free on track
Africans to Black
Built the world on our backs
Reparations what we need
Make us free on tracks

Figure 14. The hook to Reparations debate case.

A marriage of multiple discourses, the second break (see Figure 15) reflected a synthesis of findings and language from the debaters' research on transportation, critical commentary on the topics that seem to get privileged in competitive academic high school policy debate—"discussions about hegemony," "*topicality*," and "*framework*"—as well as a bar[23] from *W-4*: "ain't got nothin' to show."

Figure 15. Second Break to Reparations Debate Case

What do we see today? We been working all my life but "ain't got nothin' to show." Statistics show that Black and Brown Bodies are the majority riding public transportation on a daily basis, so why is it that the transportation in our area looks the worst until we become gentrified? Why is it that we work everyday like everyone else and have the lowest overall income in the United States? Why is it when we think about transportation we don't think about the bodies that are displaced by highways or that some of us can't even afford to ride it. How come these issues aren't placed on par with discussions about hegemony and how come this isn't as significant as topicality or framework?

Figure 15. Second break to Reparations debate case.

Figure 16. Incorporation of Evidence with Annotation

Everyone's individual experience is unique and we love everyone but there is a distinct difference in the experience of the Black Body. Sexton said, "Residential segregation, as well, is a class-bound issue for Latinos and Asian Americans; for blacks, it is a cross-class phenomenon, so much so that even the most segregated Asian Americans including many Southeast Asian refugees-are more integrated than the most integrated middle-class blacks. Poverty is principally transitional for immigrants but transgenerational and deeply entrenched for blacks."

Figure 16. Incorporation of evidence with annotation.

The students' first block quote from African American Studies scholar, Jared Sexton, which was published in the edited book *Warfare in the American Homeland* (see Figure 16) begins with the debaters' tagline to the quote: "Everyone's individual experience is unique and we love everyone but there is a distinct difference in the experience of the Black Body." This tagline signals the debaters' awareness of how others might perceive their focus on the Black body as problematic because inequalities in transportation are not just experienced by Black people. The debaters know they must explain and defend their focus on the Black body as the starting point for the discussion around inequalities. While the debaters highlight the unique transgenerational reality of poverty for Blacks as opposed to transitional poverty experienced by Latin@s and Asian Americans, the debaters clarify that their argument is concerned with eradicating oppression wherever it rears its head: "Don't get us wrong, this is not a fight for oppression Olympics but a realization of a starting point that is key to revolutionary change for not only one body or one intersection, but all." This is followed by a quote from Randall Robinson (2004), author, foreign policy advocate, founder and former president of TransAfrica, and graduate of Harvard Law School. The debaters use Robinson to elucidate how their argument for reparations goes beyond mere restitution for descendants of American slaves; their argument is about fundamentally restoring a compassionate and viable democracy (see Figure 17).

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[23] A bar, or measure, refers to a small measure of time in a verse of music. Each bar has the same number of beats, typically four, as is the case for the song*W-4*.

Figure 17. Evidence from Reparations Debate Case.

Don't get us wrong, this is not a fight for oppression Olympics but a realization of a starting point that is key to revolutionary change for not only one body or one intersection, but all.

Randall Robinson*6 Afr.-Am. L. & Pol'y Rep. 1 Tue Jul 17 2004

Leadership means the first to believe, to see, and to do what is right. It also means the capacity to see the future from where you stand now. I am not ordinarily a doomsayer, but I believe that our society and our world are in deeper crisis than at any time in my lifetime. It is not easy to see through the bombardment of news coverage that ignores most of the critical problems of our time. But, it is indeed there. We should pay heed, and we should do so now. Thus, when I talk about reparations, I am not merely talking about restitution to the contemporary victims of American slavery for slavery and the century of the de jure discrimination that followed it. I am talking about the repair of our general society. I am talking about the resuscitation of compassion. I am talking about the essential notions of decency in a viable Democratic society.

Figure 17. Evidence from Reparations debate case.

Note the underlining of the evidence in Figure 17. Given the time limitations in an eight-minute debate speech, students have to be very thoughtful and judicious in deciding what to include. As all of the evidence is available for teams and judges to read during the debate round, the debaters also have to make sure that as they underline, they are not misrepresenting an author by taking their words out of context.

The reparations argument is further textured by a quote from Frank B. Wilderson III (2010b) that positions the debaters' argument as a movement toward something "so blindingly new that it cannot be imagined" because

> reparations suggests a conceptually coherent loss. The loss of land, the loss of labor power, etc. In other words, there has to be some form of articulation between the party that has lost and the party that has gained for reparations to make sense. No such articulation exists between Blacks and the world. (para 8)

Wilderson is arguing that given that civil society gets its coherence from anti-Blackness, it is incapable of being reformed and must be completely reconceived if there is to be any possible move to eradicate anti-Blackness.

The debaters then include their final piece of supporting evidence from George Yancy (2004) as a preface to the conclusion of their speech which is an original rap written by Jay. At the time, the debaters knew that presenting arguments in the form of a rap was frowned upon and Hip-Hop pedagogy was controversial in general (Alim, 2007a). They wanted to provide a piece of evidence to which they could refer throughout the round that explained the significance of rap in expanding academic discourse, in reflecting African American rhetorics, in representing the hood, and in reflecting sociocultural realities in a nuanced way. In their choice to include this evidence, the debaters are demonstrating their metacognitive critical language awareness (Alim, 2005; Burns & Morrell, 2005) of the power dynamics at work in meshing Englishes (Young, 2014), especially when one of those Englishes is Black. Jay introduces Yancy's (2004) evidence by explaining, “Our history is written in the language of Hip-Hop and we will continue to use it to speak truth back to power. Yancy beautifully wrote…” (see Figure 18).

Figure 18. Defense of Hip-Hop Language in Reparations Case.

Our history is written in the language of hip hop and we will continue to use it to speak truth to power. Yancy beautifully wrote Yancy 04 [Geneva Smitherman: The Social Ontology of African-American Language, the Power of Nommo, and the Dynamics of Resistance and Identity Through Language]

Some just don’t want to recognize that rap is the next step in our historical journey as masters of the Word. Rap ain no aberration. These complex brothas and sistas, engaging and pushin the discursive boundaries of what is said/say-able, articulating, through Nommo, what is beautiful, marvelous, mendacious, ugly, corrupt, fucked up, and surreal, are still moving Black folk in the direction of home. Docta G knows that rap and Hip Hop bees part of that Nommo continuum, that African sense of existential and communal. Those stylizations (linguistic, bodily, aesthetic, sonic, spiritual, metaphysical) coming out of those hood spaces/places and hooded faces, they must be reflections of soul. And U know yo style oughta reflect it. Word!

Figure 18. Defense of Hip-Hop language and culture in Reparations case.

The beat of the track returns as Jay follows Yancy’s quote with one from Chuck D: “‘Hip-Hop is the Black CNN’-The Language of the people-Our culture.”

Before concluding the case with a return of the hook is Jay’s rap, which is a brilliant synthesis of the evidence and summation of the *Reparations* case. Jay includes Sexton’s (2007) argument about segregation being a cross-class and transgenerational phenomenon for Blacks, Wilderson’s (2010b) argument about reparations, and Yancy’s (2004) argument about Hip-Hop and rap as Nommo, the power of the word. The capitalized letters are Jay’s. The spelling is his and it’s intentional (see Figure 19).

Figure 19. Jay’s Rap from Reparations Case.

EVERYONES INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE IS UNIQUE
IT’S CONCRETE
NO SPECIFIC BODY GETS PUT ON THE HIGHEST PEAK
BUT IN THE BLACK BODY, THINGS ARE REAL DIFFERENT
LETS TALK ABOUT SEGREGATION GOIN ON WITHIN THE RESIDENTS
SEGREGATON IS A ISSUE FOR ASIANS AND LATINOS
BUT A CROSS-CLASS PHENOMENON FOR BLACKS
N WE KNOE
ASIAN AMERICANS ARE MORE INTERGRATED THEN BLACKS IN THE MIDDLE CLASS
SO WE ASK WEN WE SAY POVERTY WHY THE FIRST THING YOU THINK OF IS BLACKS
SPITTIN WORDS FASTER THEN BOOKIN A FLIGHT ON EXPEDIA
THE PROBLEMS WE PRESENT HAVE BEEN IGNORED BY THE MEDIA
WE NEED PREPARATIONS
TO RECIEVE THE REPARATIONS

BUT NOT FOR THE RESTITUTION OF THE PEOPLE
WHO FACED DISCRIMINATION
WE NEED TO REPAIR THE GENERAL SOCIETY
INSIDE OF ME I FEEL LIKE THEY POSSIBLY JUST LIED TO ME
MY WORDS PROBABLY ARENT SOMETHING THAT WOULD PLEASE THE MAGESTY
BUT THERE NEEDS TO BE A RESUSITATION OF CAOMPASSION AND DECENCY
THE LOSS OF LAND
THE LOSS OF POWER
WHAT IS LOST
AND WHAT IS GAINED
THERE IS NO ARTICULATION BETWEEN THE 2
IN THIS SOCIETY THAT IS FRAMED
REPAIR IS IMPOSSIBLE SO DECONSTRUTION IS KEY
SPEAKING BOUT IT THROUGH HIP HOP
IS EXACTLY WHAT WE NEED
THIS IS A MOVEMENT TOWARDS CATASTROPHE
COHERENCE IN EPISTEMOLOGY
I SUPPORT THE MOVEMENT TOWARD
INSTITUIONAL INTEGRITY
WE ARE THE BEGINNING TO BREAK IT DOWN
THE SOLUTION THAT WE SEEK
DOING IT THROUGH
H
I
P
H
O
P
IM PUSHIN THE BOUNDARY ON WHAT IS SAY AND SAY-ABLE
THESE WORDS I SPIT AINT USED TO FLUXUATE THE RECORD LABEL
I HATE TO BREAK IT YOU BUT HIP HOP IS MORE STABLE
ITS TOOL WE USE IN THE WORLD IN ORDER TO TURN THE TABLE
WE ENGAGE IN NOMMO
SO WE DONT USE YOUR LANGUAGE NO MO
MY WORDS GRASP HOLD LIKE ANGELS WITH HALOS
I SPEAK TO PPL WITH FLOWS
MUCH LIFE AFRICANS AND DRUM SOLOS
MY WORDS ARE SPEAKING TRUTH
NOT ADVERTISING POLO
COMING OUT OF THOSE HOOD SPACES
PLACES AND HOOD FACES
WE GOT A BETTER MEANS OF SOLVING
THAN MOST OF THESE AFFIRMATIVE CASES
WE NEED TO DISRUPT SOCIETIES HOMEOSTASIS
SEE WE COULD BE ACADEMIC AUTHORS AND STILL BE CREATIVE

Figure 19. Jay's rap from Reparations debate case.

In making reference to each one of the affirmative's (Terrance and Jay) authors and key arguments in *Reparation* that precedes the rap, Jay's original composition reflects his sophisticated and critical comprehension of the evidence in his and Terrance's case, as well as a unique way with words that stands out as a hybridity of languages and discourses. Jay uses metaphors and similes; blends language from philosophy, social science, sociolinguistics, Black English, Hip-Hop, African American rhetoric, and debate; and uses alternate spellings of words and shorthand from texting in defiance of what is positioned as the standard (Smitherman, 2006)—not out of ignorance. Because Jay, like other Hip-Hop heads, as indicated by Jay's use of "we," is using Hip-Hop and the power of Nommo as tools "turn the table," and to "speak to ppl[24] with flows[25]" as have countless Hip-Hop artists and African rhetors of the past and present. Acknowledging his unconventional language and literacy use, and how his "words probably aren't something that would please the magesty" Jay says that he is working to expand academic discourse: "Im pushin the boundary on what is say and say-able."

Additionally, as a result of researching issues in *The Hip-Hop Wars* (Rose, 2008) and debates around using Hip-Hop in education, Jay preempts arguments that other teams might make against him and Terrance: Hip-Hop promotes materialism; Hip-Hop culture promotes bad English; or Hip-Hop isn't political or something that can be in the service of social justice because it has been commodified by the mass media to bump up record sales for the sake of profit and sell products that feed a capitalist system. Jay raps that his "words are speaking truth not advertising polo" and his flow can't be commodified because it is coming out of his culture of Hip-Hop not the music industry. Jay says, "These words I spit aint used to fluxuate the record label" and that his use of Hip-Hop is to speak truth from the hood, not to make money for a record label (which, as someone who wants to go into music for a living, Jay had also been learning that summer about how many labels have been notorius for signing contracts with artists that limit artists' creative ingenuity and integrity, leave artists indebited to the label for a host of reasons, or end artists' career because they are unable to sign with another label while their existing one refuses to put out any new material by that artist). Jay is demonstrating a level of critical media literacy about Hip-Hop (Alim, 2005).

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[24] people

[25] "Flow" is another word for speech or rap.

Jay's final bars are laden with meaning:

Coming out of those hood spaces

Places and hood faces

We got a better means of solving

Than most of these affirmative cases

We need to disrupt societies homeostasis

See we could be academic authors and still be creative

Jay shows how he sees himself as an academic author and as an artist. He also knows how others (including perhaps his former self) might see an academic author and a creative person as having two mutually exclusive identities. Jay performatively demonstrates how they are not by bringing in his multiple identities, languages, rhetorics, and literacies into his composition. Jay is demanding to compose, learn, and speak as a whole person, not one that is dismembered—heart, spirit, and soul amputated. He unapologetically and with pride makes clear how he and Terrance are "coming out of those hood spaces, places and hood faces." They are arguing that given how they directly experience transportation inequities, coupled with their scholarly skills, means that they have a "better means of solving" these problems than others who might be scholars but aren't from these hoods. This combination of being from the hood and academic becomes a major asset and source of hope for change and uniquely positions Jay and Terrance as scholarly and organic experts and agents of change.

In Jay's next breath, he says he wants to "disrupt societies homeostasis so we could be academic authors and still be creative." Jay's ways with words reflect his Blackness, his Puerto

Rican-ness, his Hip-Hop culture, his creativity, his social justice orientation, *and* his academic identity. He is an example of how our young people are demanding that we acknowledge the complexity of their identities, and the power inherent in being able to embrace all of our young scholars' assets in order to strengthen their linguistic dexterity, intellectual growth, and social activism, as opposed to having their Blackness, or Hip-Hop culture, or their positionality as a young Black Puerto Rican from the hood be at odds with an academic identity. Jay is not only a creative emcee. Jay is not only Black. Jay is not only Puerto Rican. Jay is not only an academic. Jay is not only from the hood. Jay is not only a leader and a debater. Jay is all of that and more. And Jay is not alone.

Jay is in all of our classes. Yet our students like Jay, don't need to have a debate team to be able to create a multimodal and multilingual composition like Reparations. Students just need teachers who will free them to be their full authentic selves and enable them to make use of and extend all of their literacies and linguistic and cultural assets.

Qualified General Conclusions

The ILDI apprentices indicated that they were all too familiar with learning environments in which they had to check their cultures at the door before walking into classrooms where the teacher is the sole conveyer of knowledge and the students are there to learn that knowledge, not to create it or co-create it (Freire, 1970; McLaren, 2003). In the beginning of the apprenticeship, our students would qualify their questions before asking them and they'd qualify their work before presenting it. They were unsure of themselves: unsure they were asking the "right" questions, unsure they were giving the "right" answers; they were unsure that they were scholars. The debaters seemed surer of the reality that as Black and Brown youth, they were not expected to be scholars and leaders. These psychic and attitudinal barriers had to be acknowledged and addressed with creativity, persistent support, patience, encouragement, love, and a genuine belief that our young scholars are truly capable of sophisticated intellectual and critical thought, research, and important knowledge production. As the scholars began to unpack the stereotypes about their languages, cultures, literacies, age, race, and gender, they began to articulate their insecurities as a reflection of false stereotypical representations and expectations. Over time the course of the summer, I saw how students' resistance, doubt, and frustration slowly started to give as the students came to believe in their assets: their linguistic and cultural wealth and their inherent brilliance, the importance of their own voices and ideas, and in their capabilities as young scholars and leaders who are not just products of history, but they are also creators. They were emerging young scholars and leaders.

In addition, in growing as young scholars, they were being apprenticed by master scholars who supported this ontological work by also demystifying what a scholar "is" and what a scholar does, such that the apprentices began to draw parallels between the work that they do and are learning to do, and the work done by scholars. In the summer of 2012, the ILDI high school students were developing an understanding of what it means to be a scholar: a scholar reads widely, deeply and critically across a breadth of texts with depth and comprehension. A scholar reads the texts of visiting scholars—before the visiting scholar arrives. For a scholar, critically reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and using digital literacies are complementary processes, all of which take dedication and continued practice to master (although mastery is something that is really never attainable, as a real scholar will continue to improve their craft over the course of their life). As scholars read, view and listen with and against texts, they annotate, explore alternate viewpoints, discuss what they are seeing along the way with their peers and teachers, and develop a deeper understanding of the texts by making connections to lived experiences and relevant critical theories and empirical research.

To develop this understanding of what it means to be a scholar through doing the work of a scholar, in designing the apprenticeship, as master scholars, we had to ascertain the languages and literacies the apprentices already had. We had to see their languages and literacy practices as assets, not deficits, and find ways for the students to leverage these assets. We had to recognize and lovingly embrace all of our students' complex and dynamic identities. And we had to consistently demonstrate that we believed in their excellence; for it is one thing to tell the students that they are scholars, activists and the future, but it is an entirely different thing to get them to believe it. Having teachers who believed in them was part of the battle—the rest was up to the young people to begin to see for themselves. Yet for the young people to do this work, as educators we strived to create the best possible conditions under which this ontological transformation could occur.

From their Facebook posts and their personal statements on their applications to ILDI to their questions and comments in class, our students were giving us cues as to what they thought they needed and wanted in a curriculum. They needed a curriculum that had multiple perspectives, not just ones that only "speak on behalf of Europeans" (John, personal communication, 2012). They wanted to acquire the tools to be able to bring their own perspectives, languages and literacy practices into conversations, research, compositions, and debates around topics. They wanted to learn how to create and share new knowledge as young scholars and as organic intellectuals. They wanted to feel their voices were heard, important, and could speak truth to power. They wanted to develop an understanding of and a capacity to wield the tools needed to change the activity of debate and the problems they saw in their communities. The young scholars wanted to know that they mattered.

The students said they loved debate because they saw it as a method to achieve these goals and objectives. They began seeing the practices of reading, writing, speaking, listening, teamwork, critical thinking, digitally creating, etcetera, as real-life skills. But learning these skills was enjoyable. Learning was fun. It was with friends in an environment where they didn't have to code-switch languages, literacies, and identities. They didn't have to fear getting a bad grade because they were freed to engage in a reflexive *process* of composition instead of having to use or being penalized for not using the "right" words and phrases in the "correct" way or form. And while having Hip-Hop as part of the pedagogy could help build home spaces, it also meant that Hip-Hop could become a resource for research and composition: the students could use Hip-Hop texts as evidentiary support for arguments, to make connections between their lives and other texts, to synthesize information from multiple types of texts, and to use as a language, culture, and literacy to create new texts and original knowledge production.

Through lessons and activities, over time the students became more familiar with ways to draw on critical theory, historical analysis, multiple literacies, oral language, rhetoric, hybrid languages, and Hip-Hop, to practice different ways of using language and literacies to make meaning around texts, (re)present texts and research, and produce, create, and practice sharing new research in the interest of social change—indeed, social change is a major motivating factor behind students' language literacy practices, as is the ability to be their whole authentic selves. As a result of the students' work, students began demonstrating their understanding of how being a debater, or being a scholar, does not mean that one cannot also be bilingual or multilingual, multicultural, Hip-Hop, hood, Chicana, Dominican, Black, Haitian, Puerto Rican, athletic, a foodie, an immigrant, etcetera; in fact, there is power in embracing all of who one is. Jay demonstrates how his metacognitive awareness of his linguistic and cultural assets and all of his complex identities can be leveraged to create arguments in support of expanding academic discourse.

However, this process can be messy on multiple fronts. The context of the apprenticeship offers a window into many of the challenges potentially facing budding young scholars (especially those who are Black and Brown living in low-income and poor communities)—realities that master scholars (teachers) must understand to the best of their abilities. These understandings should help inform pedagogies, curriculum design, and methods to scaffold learning and create (or design opportunities for the apprentices to create) bridges between lessons and activities and the apprentices' sociocultural worlds. Part of this includes generating consistent opportunities for practice, utilizing various modes, technologies, languages, and literacies for apprentices to use to make meaning out of topics and activities that at times may seem tangential or irrelevant to the apprentices' material and sociocultural realities, needs, and aspirations.

As instructors, we also had to find ways to address the apprentices' material and social needs head on. We had to attend to the realities of anti-Blackness, deficit narratives and students' habitual deference to "experts" and fear of public speaking; and we had to address material needs that function as barriers to students showing up to class (or debate tournaments) and/or participating and learning: students who need more coaching, students without transportation money to get to class, students whose families are facing eviction, students who also have work to help support their families, students who have to babysit younger siblings, and students experiencing health problems, hunger, and grief from the loss of loved ones. These obstacles are no doubt massively challenging, but they are not impenetrable or insurmountable. They do not require first fully tackling social and economic inequalities (although they do necessitate a sustained commitment to eradicating them over time); but they do demand creativity, perseverance, and leveraging all available financial, social, and political capital (including that derived from one's privilege position as a graduate student at an Ivy League university with financial resources, technologically rich classrooms in which to teach and learn, free Wi-Fi, libraries, and other graduate students and professors within academic departments and in leadership positions who care deeply about and are tirelessly committed in their own research, teaching, and university service to the development and sustained support of the academic and critical literacies of our young Black and Brown scholars, artists, and leaders). As Freire (1970) reminds us, we must view the challenges—the oppression—our students (and teachers) face, not as static barriers, but rather as limiting situations; and we must creatively and persistently work within these limiting situations to do whatever we can with everything that is at our disposal, while keeping our eye on the larger prize of eradicating these barriers altogether.

Chapter Five: Black Gold: Extending the Apprenticeship

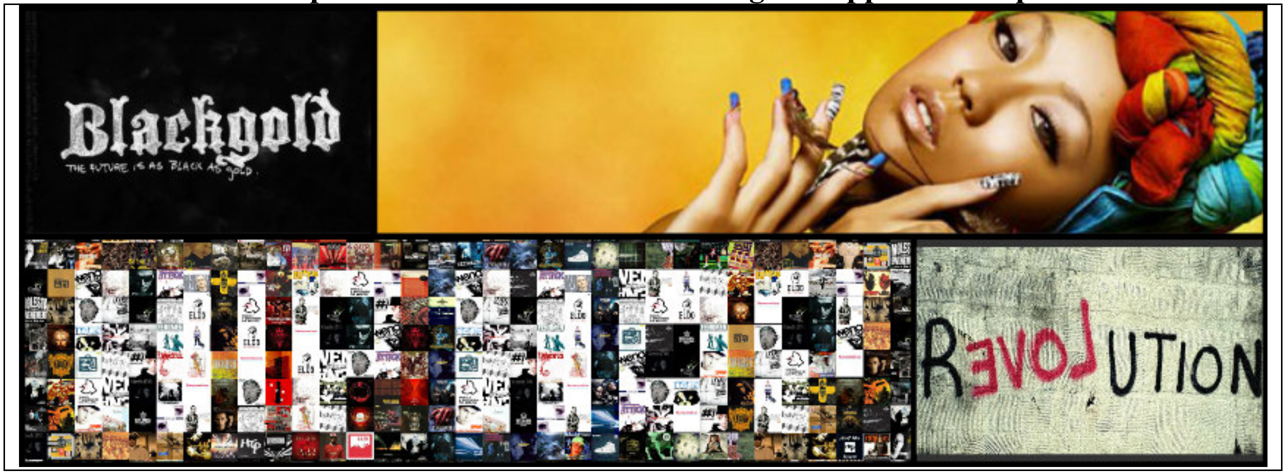
Blackgold
THE FUTURE IS AS BLACK AS GOLD.
REVOLUTION
LOVE

Figure 20. Terrance's graphic design for hoodies he and Shakiya wore at the 2013 UDL National Championship at Georgetown University.

> "Black Feminism, Love, Black Gold, Revolution, and everything hip hop related, i think its wicked cool since i made it lol."
> – April 2, 2013 email from Terrance regarding his graphic design (see Figure 20) for hoodies that he and Shakiya wore while they competed at the 2013 Urban Debate League National Championship at Georgetown University.

Introduction

This chapter follows Shakiya, Terrance, Mickey, and John Ortiz, four focal students from the Ivy League Debate Institute, as they trained for and participated in national high school debate tournaments and academic presentations during the 2012-2013 school year, to examine the role of the debate apprenticeship in the development of students' academic literacies, civic engagement, and identities. I use sociocultural theory that sees learning as changing participation over time in communities of practice (Lave, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), to examine the literacy events (Barton & Hamilton, 2000) in which the four focal students participated. I draw from observations, video footage, and student artifacts from the Ivy League Debate Institute in the summer institute of 2012, debate trainings, and weekend debate tournaments, as well as online and personal correspondence with students. In examining these literacy events, I looked for evidence of students' development and use of academic literacies (reading, writing, speaking, listening, digital technology use, viewing, researching, and debating texts and theories), civic engagement, and the development of empowered and critical identities.

I begin with the end of the 2012 ILDI summer institute and then look at the literacy events over the course of the 2012-2013 school year. I conclude with making some general statements about the role of debate, oral language and new literacies in the development of academic literacies, civic engagement, and empowered identities among the focal students.

The Ivy League Debate Institute Awards Ceremony and Community Celebration, August 25, 2012

As South Bronx-based DJ Static, who is Immortal Technique's official DJ, fades out the music from the records spinning on his turntables, Mickey rises from the table where his three colleagues are seated, and assumes a confident position at the podium to begin the demonstration debate. Grandmothers, parents, older and younger siblings, aunties and uncles, friends, younger debaters, and professors and staff from the host university are filed into the chapel seats, eagerly awaiting the debate between four young scholars from the Ivy League Debate Institute who had been studying at the university for eight weeks.

To compose the opening affirmative speech, debate partners Mickey and John had annotated and synthesized a number of fictional, academic, digital, and multimodal texts they had been devouring over the summer—texts ranging from documentaries, Hip-Hop music, and peer-reviewed journals to autobiographies and young adult literature—that crossed a number of disciplines: ethnic studies, political and social science, education, and social and critical theory.

I remember when Mickey and John approached me the first week of the institute carrying the young adult novel, *The House on Mango Street.* They said how much they loved it and how it really got them thinking about their own lives in relation to the topics we were discussing at the institute around inequalities in transportation in the United States. I was excited to think about how a young adult novel could resonate with the young scholars to such an extent that they could make connections between the text and their lives and then use the novel as a springboard for further critical research. With suggestions from faculty on additional reading material and reading strategies to build upon this connection the young scholars had with *The House on Mango Street*, John and Mickey proceeded to read and annotate a number of complex informational and digital texts.

After complementing the young adult novel with *Queer Latinidad: Identity Practices, Discursive Spaces (Sexual Cultures)* by Juana Rodriguez, and Dylan Rodriguez' *Suspended Apocalypse: White Supremacy, Genocide, and the Filipino Condition*, and after viewing socially relevant documentaries, listening to a voluminous amount of Hip-Hop music, and reading Mickey Melendez' autobiographical book on Latin@ rights and the Young Lords Organization, among many other texts, the debaters produced a culminating essay (which read orally takes eight minutes to present) that provides a historical account of colonialism and the enslavement and forced migration[26] of Africans and Taínos to and within the Americas beginning in the 15th century. The essay/debate case develops into an argument in support of Latin@-based politics of identity and culture to create coalitions of resistance against anti-Black and colonialist epistemologies and practices.

Emblematic of their creative language use, Mickey and John titled their debate argument, "No Culture Left Behind," a clear play on the No Child Left Behind Act passed under the George W. Bush administration that made federal education funding for states contingent upon their annual administration of a statewide standardized test to all students—a policy that the debaters frequently put on blast in casual conversations and on Facebook posts.

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[26] When I say "forced migration" I am trying to do justice to the complexity of the students' essay/speech, which highlights how their families' migration to the United States from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic did not occur in a vacuum but in the context the history of colonialism, militarism, and anti-Blackness.

Reading from his laptop, Mickey introduces the case with a quote from Felipe Luciano, one of the three Original Last Poets—a Harlem-grown group of poets and musicians that arose out of the artistic vitality of the civil rights and Black nationalist movements in the late 1960s, and, one of the earliest influences on Hip-Hop culture (some call them the first Hip-Hop group)—and co-founder of the New York chapter of the Puerto Rican Young Lords, a radical social activist group founded by young Puerto Ricans in the U.S. that emerged in response to U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico and the growing poverty and discrimination facing Puerto Ricans in the U.S. mainland (8/25/2012). Mickey begins:

> So this essay is called 'No Culture Left Behind.' In an essay about revolutionary activism, written in 1970, Felipe Luciano[27] an ex-Young Lord argues *passionately*, and I quote: 'Colonialism has *messed up* our minds so *badly* that *psychologically*, we don't even know who we *are* or where we came *from*. We reject our *cultural values* and basic *human* values by *imitating* that which is *not natural* to us and by *stomping* on our own *reflection*. We've been systematically taught to *hate ourselves* while being reminded *constantly* by racist America that we ain't her kind of people either. Puerto Ricans *suffer* both *racially* and *culturally*.'

Mickey could have easily introduced Luciano's essay with much less detail (or none at all). Mickey could have merely said something to the effect of "Felipe Luciano once wrote that 'Colonialism has messed up our minds...both racially and culturally.'" Instead, Mickey demonstrates a deeper understanding of academic discourse and the importance of orienting his "readers" (the audience) before getting into the meat of Luciano's text, by classifying the type of text from which he will be quoting—an essay—as well as the essay's subject matter: revolutionary activism. Mickey also locates the text in time: 1970; and he briefly qualifies who

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[27] Luciano, F. (1970 May 8). On Revolutionary Nationalism. *Palante, 2*(2). Reprinted in 2010: Luciano, F. (2010) On revolutionary nationalism. In D. Enck-Wanzer (Ed.), *The Young Lords: A reader* (pp. 133-136). New York, NY: New York University Press.

Luciano is: “an ex-Young Lord.” Mickey also describes the quality of Luciano’s argument as “passionate.”

Using his body to guide the tempo of his speech, as he speaks Mickey slightly sways rhythmically back and forth from the left and right while punctuating certain words with controlled but effective hand gestures. His words are clear and well emphasized (as indicated by the italics). Although the light cast upon the stage illuminating Mickey’s summer-tanned light skin is bright, while he reads from his laptop he makes a point to work the crowd—like a seasoned orator he seems to be reading his audience’s body language to make sure they are with him. “So first, we bring it back to 1492,” Mickey again temporally contextualizes his argument to orient his audience as he makes eye contact with a few spectators before returning to read from his speech.

> *Christopher Columbus*, whose name *literally means*, Christ-bearing colonizer, wrote in his diary that *he and his sailors* saw ‘naked men’ and womyn whom they found *very healthy looking*. From landing at the Bahamas, and sailing onto Cuba and Bohio, renaming it Española, Columbus soon noted a widespread language and systems of beliefs and ways of life. Conferring with various *caciques* he heard them call themselves ‘*Taíno*.’ La Pinta, la Niña, y la Santa Maria were used as vehicles for transporting Taínos for *four voyages* (Mickey holds up four fingers). In the *Middle Passage*, the slave triangle enslaved *millions* of Africans. Nearly 57% of all Africans went to Brazil and colonies in what would become Latin America. And about 20% of Africans went to the colonies in North America.

Almost in recognition of how he just dropped a veritable amount of historical facts (using Spanish and English words) with concrete details and quotations about the transatlantic slave trade and the colonization of the Americas, writing features that are expected to be present in the composition of an informative essay in 11th and 12th grades (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2.B), Mickey slows down to adapt to his audience and explain his position on the cultural significance of this violently forced corporeal transportation and enslavement.

> The problem is, these people came in *one way* and came out another. Just like Taíno's were first *strong* "healthy people" (Mickey uses air quotes) who held strong ties with *nature* were now *showcased* for *European society*. (Mickey pauses for effect to let his word choice sink in). The slaves went in *African* and came out *Black*.

Looking up to scan the audience and holding up his left hand with five fingers extended, Mickey raises the volume of his voice and punctuates his speech with three synchronized pulses of his hand as he drops the hook to his speech that positions his Greek Puerto Rican social location within the context of his debate case:

> *For 500 years*, they transported our bodies but left our culture behind.
>
> I went from African and Taíno to Boricua and Dominican all in a slave's time.

While continuing to embody his speech with metered arm and hand movements, Mickey returns his gaze to his laptop to read his case that is beginning to show signs of the rhetorical device of repetition:

> For *500 years,* Western metaphysics has tried to *detach us* from our *bodies*: take the *body* but *leave* the *mind* and *soul* of our *people*. We went from *African*, *Taíno* to *Boricua* and *Dominican*. And *now,* we are transported to *again,* but told to leave our culture at the door.

With piercing eyes focused on the audience, Mickey slows down to signal another temporal shift in his story. "Now, let's bring it back to 2012." He picks up the pace of his delivery and continues to weave in the language from his introduction while explaining the ways in which the ideology of colonialism and racism is entrenched in language and assimilationist politics and discourses in the 21st century, slowing eviscerating Latin@ and African cultural legacies:

> 21st century America continues the discourse of detaching the *body* and culture to support the norms of racist America. They make us stomp our *own reflection* and cultural values so we can *become* like the *oppressor*. *Racist policies* imposed on Latina[28] groups like those in Arizona, native-born rights, English only (unclear), impose policies and norms that would have us *abolish* our common Latino history and *reject* our African heritage. The only way they become acceptable to civil society is to *conform* to their norms. And in order to do that, well, you shouldn't be occupying this space. These *norms* and *ideas* are what's caused the *destruction* and *degradation* of our culture for generations and generations.

Integrating his second in-text citation into his speech, Mickey reads part of the annotation he and John did of a peer-reviewed journal article about the process of assimilation for immigrants in the U.S. and the way in which that process is reflected in his own positionality as a fourth generation Greek Boricua whose mother wanted him to succeed in the United States and hence never taught him Spanish.

> Jack Citrin et al,[29] provides a reasonable assessment of assimilation when he writes that: first generation Latino 'immigrants change American culture by diluting the original ingredients in the pot' however as everything begins to settle over generations, the spices of the culture within this melting pot are overtaken by the dominant taste of Anglo Saxon culture. This assimilation entails the adoption of an American' way of life: speaking English fluently, adhering to Anglo puritan mores and 'American' patriotism. So that by the third generation, these Latinos become more similar to native-born Whites than to first generation Latinos. The same is true for those with ancestry from Asia, Africa, and so on.
>
> John and I are the perfect examples of this thing. I, as a fourth generation Greek Boricua, cannot speak Spanish or engage in the cultural activities that John can as a first generation Dominican who can speak Spanish.

In citing an article written by Jack Citirin, Amy Leman, Michael Murakai, and Kathryn Pearson (2007), Mickey and John abbreviate the article's authors with using the first author's last name followed by /et al./ reflecting a common practice in academic writing when citing a source with three or more authors. Although the annotation of the evidence glosses over the researchers' data and method, the debaters' summary of the research findings is accurate. While Mickey and

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[28] Instead of using /@/ I use /a/ and /o/ to indicate the different ways that Mickey said /Latin@/.

[29] Citrin, J. Lerman, A., Murakami, M, & Pearson, K. (2007). Testing Huntington: Is Hispanic immigration a threat to American identity? *Perspectives on Politics*, 1, 31-48.

John may exclude the research methods, they will nonetheless likely be called upon to explain how Citrin et al. (2007) came to their findings; Mickey and John will have to understand and be able to articulate the data, how the data was collected, how it was analyzed, the limitations of the data, all of which might be used by other debaters to dispute Mickey and John's assessment of assimilation.

Mickey and John's composition then makes connections between arguments made in peer-reviewed journal articles, Hip-Hop texts, and students' lived experiences with modern-day transportation and the corresponding sociocultural and life-threatening effects of gentrification in the young scholars' neighborhoods where people of color are experiencing poverty, forced relocation into government-subsidized housing projects or houselessness,[30] unemployment, incarceration, and the erasure of cultures and identities:

> But it's *also* important to note that assimilation forms in a *very material* way and *specifically* in an *urban* context. East Harlem is filled will poor people of color *struggling* to make ends meet. People *struggle* to pay the bills. From 2:30 to 8 pm the train 'stays packed like a multicultural slave ship,[31]' transporting our bodies to serve the continuation of Western Metaphysics while our culture's *left at home*. They take our *language*, our *behavior*, and our *thoughts* to fit in with dominant settings. The *oppressed always has* to know the ways of the *oppressor* but the oppressor *never* has to learn *our ways*.
> And this *continual struggle* is in *our* neighborhoods: *Brooklyn*, *South Bronx*, *Queens* and *Harlem*, are now being *invaded* by the same rich families just like back in 50s *cus we moved in*. Now that it is vital to be close to transportation systems, *yuppies* begin to *settle* into these areas causing the *cost* of *rent* to *spike*. This causes *poor* people of *color* who can *barely afford their apartments* to move into the inner-city projects like *Ravenswood*, *Queens Bridge*, *Bronx River Houses*, *Marcy Projects* and more, where we're *reduced* to illegal methods like selling drugs to survive, *condemning* too many of our sisters and brothers to *violence*, *death*, and *incarceration* or, these people become *homeless* on the streets of New York. Author of *Barrio Dreams*, Ariene Dávila[32] argues that the gentrification of these neighborhoods *not only holds physical* and *social effects*, it also causes the *fundamental erasure* of *culture* particularly for Puerto Rican and Latino culture. As middle class people get to move and move in they're *destroying* the *culture* that was built here, making the very notion of a Latino identity *non-existent*.

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[30] I say "houselessness" in favor of "homelessness" because one can still make a home without a house.

[31] Immortal Technique (2003). Harlem streets. On *Revolutionary Vol. 2*. New York, NY: Viper Records.

[32] Dávila, A. (2004). *Barrio dreams: Puerto Ricans, Latinos, and the neoliberal city*. Oakland,CA: University of California Press.

As if he had just concluded the second verse to a Hip-Hop track, Mickey then returns to the speech's rhyming hook:

Once again, just like 1492, they transported our *bodies* but *left* our *culture behind*.
I went from *African* and *Taíno* to *Boricua* and *Dominican* all in a slave's time.

Extending the theme of corporeal and cultural transportation, Mickey and John's debate employs multiple literacies and types of texts to texturize the extent of assimilation and cultural genocide in the 21st century. The high school students' composition integrates academic evidence from peer-reviewed journal articles (Jack Citrin et al. and Ariene Dávila), books (Dylan Rodriguez and Mickey Melendez), historical documents (Felipe Luciano's political essay), Hip-Hop texts ("From 2:30 to 8pm the train 'stays packed like a multicultural slave ship'" is adapted from Hip-Hop artist Immortal Technique's song *Harlem Streets*), documentary footage (of Juan Gonzalez, Mickey Melendez, and Felipe Luciano), and personal narratives, to draw parallels between the transportation of the transatlantic slave trade and the personal experiences of the ILDI debaters who had been discussing at the institute the ways in which they and their families and friends experienced transportation in the context of socioeconomics, and sociocultural and linguistic domination.

Mickey and John then demonstrate their comprehension of some of the literature they researched, read, and discussed that summer by drawing from annotations the young scholars wrote about those texts. In the example that follows, the young scholars draw from critical theory and literature in ethnic studies to help build their evidence-based debate case that includes an argument that gentrification, assimilation, and genocide are manifestations of White nation building and are operationalized through the ideology of White supremacy undergirding Western metaphysics.

> That is the same liquidation of culture that has been in perpetuation since the birth of Western metaphysics. Dylan Rodriguez[33] contextualizes the framing of cultural genocide when he says that this has always been the pedagogical mission of Western metaphysics. Gentrification and assimilation are just tools of white supremacy—it's only a means to an end, the end being successful cultural genocide. He analyzes the genealogy of genocide to make people understand the historical death of indigenous culture and communities as a precondition for physical genocide that came after. He also states that Western metaphysics relies on a false distinction between physical and cultural death, failing to see that they are the same thing because they are both facets of White nation building.

Synthesizing theories from Latin@ studies and queer performance studies, and weaving in Luciano's text from the introduction of *No Culture Left Behind*, Mickey situates his and John's original debate case within the national high school debate topic and interrogates the relationship between power, knowledge, race, culture, oppression, and transportation investment in the United States:

> This year's resolution calls for the United States federal government to increase its transportation infrastructure investments in the U.S. The 1AC represents an intersectional approach to this resolution. John and I re-affirm our Latino identity within this debate through an investment in Latinidad. The framework for this round is the judge should vote for the team that best shows the White Anglo paradigm as the center of power. Our affirmation allows us to interrogate the issue of Western metaphysics that led Latinos to be known as oppressed people. We are not opposed to transportation infrastructure investments rather we disidentify with a normative interpretation of that resolution as a means to attack our culture. What is meant by disidentification is that we desire something should be enacted, however with certain conditions, that being: as our bodies are transported, our culture should be transported along with us. We must not forget who we are just so that we can fit American ideals. Felipe Luciano makes it very clear that even if we stomp on our own image of culture, we will always be seen as inferior and will never be America's kind of people.

Mickey next introduces the advocacy of his and John's debate case based upon their interpretation of the 2012-2013 national debate topic on increasing transportation infrastructure investment in the United States. Mickey contrasts his and John's interpretation with a more normative view of the national topic out of which teams might develop cases that advocate for federal government investment in high speed rail or highway construction, as just two of many examples. When Mickey and John write that "We are not opposed to transportation infrastructure investments; rather we disidentify with a normative interpretation of that resolution as a means to attack our culture," the young scholars are drawing from ILDI class discussions about the subjective nature of the national topic, Latin@ studies, and the concept of disidentification from queer performance studies (Muñoz, 1999), as a way to anticipate opposing viewpoints that might position the young scholars' affirmative case as being outside the purview of the national debate topic, or *untopical*. While Mickey and John are not necessarily opposed to an instrumental view of the topic, they argue that because historically, transportation for Blacks and Latin@s has meant transporting their bodies but leaving their cultures behind, Mickey and John disidentify with an interpretation of transportation that might also create policies that focus on the physicality of movement while simultaneously, whether intentionally or not (albeit these intentions aren't explicitly engaged by the young scholars), perpetuating cultural kidnapping and erasure. By explaining their reasons for disidentifying with a normative interpretation of the resolution, Mickey and John are demonstrating how they have worked hard to "be at a whole other level of the discussion," as DSRB put it on the first day of the ILDI summer institute, so that in debating negative teams who argue Mickey and John's case isn't *topical*, Mickey and John can "think around and between they toes before they catch up wichchu" (DSRB, personal communication, June 28, 2012). Mickey and John are trying to expand the scope of what can be debated under the transportation topic to make room for affirmative cases like *No Culture Left Behind,* cases that symbolically and performatively embrace the meshing of different languages, non-dominant cultures and texts, racial and ethnic performances, and counter-dominant histories, to facilitate the critical investigation of and debates around problems and possible solutions to issues that the young scholars and their peers have discussed over the summer as being most relevant to their lives as Black and Brown youth living in poor urban areas.

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[33] Rodriguez, D. (2010). Suspended apocalypse: White supremacy, genocide, and the Filipino condition. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

As Mickey and John use peer-reviewed journal articles, Hip-Hop texts, autobiographies, and personal narratives as evidentiary support, and blend poetry with expository and persuasive writing and oral language that includes words from Spanish, Dominant American English, and Hip-Hop, the young scholars' composition stands in contrast to educational standards around reading, writing, and history that privilege monocultural and monolingual norms, and histories and texts that are presumed to be politically and socioculturally neutral. Using multiple types of texts and drawing from various academic disciplines (history, ethnic studies, political science, queer performance studies), the debaters' argument also locates the oppression of Blacks and Latin@s in the context of sociopolitical, cultural and historical realities that the debaters argue are made possible by White supremacy and colonialist discourses entrenched in Eurocentric mediations of history, media, and culture, that can and must be changed in the interest of racial and social justice and the humanization of Black and Brown bodies, histories, cultures, and ways of knowing, organizing, communicating, and living.

> The 1AC is the best starting point, by 1AC I mean the first affirmative constructive, is the best starting point to struggle against the White Anglo paradigm, because of the embodiment of Latinidad in this round. Latinidad comes from a Latino-based politics of identity and culture and creates a way to create coalitions of resistance with others against Western metaphysics. In the contexts of the debate space, we can begin to Latinize communities of resistance to assimilation. We represent the graffiti on the white train called policy debate. The reality is that the debate community has created a certain type of debater, in the face of that assimilation we must reaffirm our identity through perpetuating forms of our culture until the genealogical breakdown of how the slave became black, how the Taíno became Latino…When we begin to observe our ways in this space, we begin to observe our language, our culture, history and nationality. As Latinos in Anglo society we cannot commodify our culture anymore, we must STOP participating in *his* language, *his* TV shows, *his* food, *his* culture, *his*-story.

Drawing from Hip-Hop culture, Mickey explains how he and John metaphorically "represent the graffiti on the White train called policy debate" by embracing Latinidad, a Latino-based politics of resistance aimed at illuminating how "the slave became Black, how the Taíno became Latin@," to retain a sense of who they are as young Latin@ men in debate, by observing their language, culture, history and nationality. Reflecting critical literacies, Mickey and John demonstrate their awareness that what constitutes the boundaries of 'knowledge' is inexorably linked with power and ideology (Foucault, 1977; Gee, 2000). But the young scholars are going beyond mere criticism of existing power relations; their critical research is in the interest of social change (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1998). While of course the young debaters are not going to completely "stop participating in *his* language, *his* TV shows, *his* food, *his* culture, *his*-story," as the debaters still employ features of Dominant American English, adopt academic writing conventions as is evidenced by such things like their use of academic texts, citations, and language like "et al." (not to mention how much Mickey will continue to love and shout out Lebron James and the New York Yankees on Facebook), the debaters' rhetorical exaggeration is used as a performance to signal their opposition to the privileging of Eurocentric culture, language and "his-stories" that are at the exclusion of those that the Mickey and John also possess as a youths, as a Greek Boricua or first generation Dominican, as Hip-Hop, as debaters, and as now self-proclaimed young scholars, leaders and activists. Additionally, as John and Mickey present their argument in public, at the Ivy League University in front of fellow debaters, coaches, professors, and family and community members who may not share the young scholars' sentiments, the young scholars are also seeking to change hearts and minds of those both inside and outside of debate.

Mickey points to John to cue up the audio clip from a documentary film and announces, "Next a clip from the Young Lords' Felipe Luciano, Mickey Melendez, and Juan Gonzalez." Mickey waits but the clip doesn't play. While Mickey could have tested the clip prior to the event to make sure it would play, he nonetheless is prepared to push on. He smiles and subtly chuckles, brushing off the technological hiccup. Without missing a beat, Mickey seamlessly transitions to his backup: a written translation of the clip—of course this 16-year-old has thought of a backup plan for his multimodal composition.

> So I now quote from the Young Lords' Felipe Luciano: 'Nothing institutional stayed in the community other than the bourgeoisie organizations: the educational organizations, the church organizations they *stayed*, but we did not,' meaning the Young Lords, 'so these kids, our children, had to forge themselves to adopt a new identity, a new language in a vacuum.' Mickey Melendez similarly says, 'at the point where government fails and people organize themselves and confront government, that's in the spirit of the Young Lords.' Juan Gonzales: 'Once your mind is free, once you believe that you are equal to anyone else, and you depend on your fellow members of a group or whatever for your support, you can do anything.'[34]

While it is likely that there were audience members unaware of the history, or even the existence, of the Young Lords, and as such, would have been at a loss in knowing to what Luciano, Melendez and Gonzalez were referring in the documentary clip, and consequently, actualizing the potential power of the clip might have required that Mickey and John briefly contextualized and prefaced it. Nevertheless, it is not without import that Mickey and John go beyond the mere use of print text to texture their debate argument through their incorporation of audio from documentary footage. The young scholars recognized that documentaries are another form of text that can provide a different window into history and contemporary issues, and can be leveraged as evidentiary support that might not be readily available in print form. While this multimodal composition is done in the context of debate, there is no reason that teachers outside of debate cannot also free students to draw from multiple textual forms like documentaries in composition assignments.

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[34] From: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwtgAE8foco

Mickey follows the former Young Lords' call for breaking from mental slavery with an interlude of praise for those who have taught him along the way, acknowledging that he stands on the shoulders of giants. He uses English and Spanish, repetition, and evokes a rhetoric of celebration and community.

> This is for those Zapatistas, those who died for la *causa*, for Puerto Rican independence. This is for Mickey, Cha Cha and all of the Young Lords. This is for the memory of the Rainbow Coalition. Remember your Fred Hampton. Remember your Che, the Cuban Five, Black Panther Party, and Don Pedro Albizu Campos, those men and womyn who died on the Mexican-American border without any JUST CAUSE. It's time to forge a new identity, it's time to forge new movements and this is the place to do it, in our own backyards, this is our training ground. And we must embody our culture—who we are—and work together as a group in the struggle.
>
> *They transported our bodies but left our culture behind.*
> *I went from African and Taíno to Boricua and Dominican all in a slave's time.*

As I listened to Mickey deliver that speech that he and John wrote, I remember thinking, "Wow, this is the same Mickey who tried everything to get out of that first morning cypher led by DP in July?" Mickey had no reservations now in publically sharing (and showing off) of his languages and literacies including his thoughtful narrative structure; developing mastery over certain features of academic discourse; growing understanding of effective voice modulations, including cadence and strategic use of pauses instead of having non-fluency features (unintentional, unplanned or pauses with vocal fillers like *um* and *uh*); his ability to complement his word choices with thoughtful emphasis to achieve different effects; extensive research and aptitude for using evidence to support an argument; reading comprehension and ability to synthesize a wide-variety of texts, modes, and technologies; oral speech delivery skills like exuding confidence and passion; and connecting with the audience through effective use of nonverbal body language (scanning the audience, giving eye contact, maintaining an upright posture, and effective use of gestures) and even poking a little fun at himself during his technological snafu. From Mickey's use of logic, evidence and multimodality, to his cadence, flow and word choices, and from his use of stories, repetition, and poetry, to how he styled his body and his verbal, nonverbal and paraverbal language, he demonstrates how he has been hard at work in trying to master the modes of persuasion that he learned in Toya Green's seminar at ILDI that summer on Ethos, Pathos, and Logos, and the African American rhetorical techniques taught throughout the summer by DSRB, Deverick Murray, Toni Hill, Elizabeth Jones, Damiyr Davis, Rashad Evans, Miguel Feliciano, and Chris Randall.

Furthermore, this multimodal evidenced-based persuasive essay/speech, wasn't researched, discussed, written, tested, edited, presented and debated to earn a good grade or pass a test; the motivation for developing and using literacies and language is much more complex and pivoted toward sociocritical thought (Gutiérrez, 2008) and action. Before ending *No Culture Left Behind* by returning to the hook or chorus of the speech (reflecting how Jay and Terrance used their hook in their *Reparations* affirmative), with conviction Mickey declares that "It's time to forge a new identity. It's time to forge new movements and this is the place to do it, in our own backyards, this is our training ground." He and John, like the other young scholars at ILDI (as was evidenced across the ILDI personal statements, classroom discussions, and debate cases), identified the debate institute as a "training ground" for the investigation and development of academic skills, new ideas, identities, and movements for change.

Like so many of other debaters' compositions, to create their debate argument, Mickey and John read widely, deeply, and critically across myriad informational and literary texts with comprehension, which meets the Common Core's standard for Range of Reading and Level of

Text Complexity for grade 12 (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.R1.12.10). They wrote consistently with meaningful theses, organization, supporting evidence and details, and vocabulary and sentence variety, meeting the 12th grade Common Core standards for Text Types and Purposes (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1). Blending empirical research, audio clips, autobiographies, theory, Hip-Hop culture, historical texts, with original analysis, prose, poetics, rhetorical techniques, and oratory, Mickey and John's argument is multimodal, multilingual, and complex (New London Group, 1996); and their language use is exercised with a fair amount of dexterity and precision, especially considering that both young scholars are only 16.

Mickey and John use their hybrid language and literacies practices to drop a counter-dominant history and critical interpretation of the national high school debate resolution, both of which reflect and allow the young men to embraces their bicultural identities (Darder, 2012). The young scholars present a critical genealogical perspective on the transportation topic that exposes what Mickey, John, and the authors of their evidence argue is inexorably linked with racial and ethnic oppression fueled by White supremacist and (neo)colonial nation-building—a critical perspective which is not something that would be inherent in an instrumental view of the transportation topic, but one that arose out of the context of teaching and learning through critical pedagogy (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Giroux & McLaren, 1989; McLaren, 2003).

Yet the context around the composition of *No Culture Left Behind* is qualitatively different than a typical written composition. Reminiscent of the field of English in the 18th and 19th centuries, the young scholars' composition was geared toward public oration, yet this was not at the expense of the written form, as they also had to publish their debate arguments online on debate wiki sites in order to compete at debate tournaments (aside from italicizing words that Mickey emphasized, I did not change the grammar of the young scholar's text.) As the debaters' production is a combination of multiple and multimodal literacies, texts, and technologies—oral language, writing, listening, reading, viewing, books, journals, music, audiovisuals, and wikis—the debaters use of literacies is dynamic and intertextual and reflects the ways in which literacy has "come to mean a rapid and continuous process of change in the ways in which we read, write, view, listen, compose, and communicate information" (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear & Leu, 2008, p. 5) in the 21st century.

As literacy use changes, so do the meanings and functions of words in the world. John and Mickey deploy their literacies to disrupt "normative interpretations" of the national topic of transportation infrastructure as they argue that such interpretations risk framing transportation infrastructure investment as something benign, neutral, and ahistorical. *No Culture Left Behind* contains a critical eye toward the way in which language is used to exercise power (Fairclough, 2010); on the one hand, certain interpretations of the transportation investment topic could reproduce inequalities, while others could hold the possibility for making room for their eradication by shedding light on those inequalities and revealing the related and supporting processes at work.

At the core of their scholarship, the young scholars' critical research and textual production is in the interest of social change (Morrell, 2004; Kincheloe & McLaren, 1998). Taking up the task of organizing a cross-cultural base of revolutionaries, inspired by the likes of Fred Hampton, Mickey and John are seeking social transformation by forming "coalitions of resistance."[35] Mickey eventually extends this call for coalitions at the end of the awards ceremony by introducing "The Young Scholars Organization"—an organization that Mickey modeled after the Young Lords and the Black Panther Party in order to mobilize and organize his fellow young scholars, leaders, and advocates in order to improve the living conditions in their neighborhoods (see Figure 21).

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[35] Albeit in 2013-2014 this notion of a "coalition" fades as anti-Blackness takes more of a center stage in John and Mickey's argumentation and view of the world.

Figure 21. Young Scholars Organization Mission Statement

Mission Statement

I am a Young Scholar, I am a Young Activist, WE are the Future.

This is the statement that our organization is built upon. As young people within this society we have noticed and/or been subjected to certain injustices and inequities within our communities due to factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, income etc. but we remain quiet and helpless as we watch our families and the families around us struggle to make ends meet. Our communities have been plagued with issues of health, unemployment, sub-standard education and been deprived of the basic necessities of food and shelter. As Young Scholars we would like to provide other Youth with the same opportunities that we had to grow as people within this society. We seek to provide programs which would help improve living conditions within our neighborhoods politically, socially, and economically and are open to any other form of empowerment at the request of the people who live in these areas. We seek to empower the MIND, BODY, and SOUL of our people so that we may resist structures that contribute to the oppression of fellow Sisters and Brothers. Former Young Lord Miguel "Mickey" Melendez once wrote to me: "To the next generation that will defend our dignity. Pa'Lante (go forward)…..In our lifetime." The Young Scholars are a fulfillment of that call- We are the next generation of activists who will take the work of movements like the Young Lords and the Black Panthers to the next step.

Figure 21. Young Scholars Organization mission statement presented publically at the 2012 Public Debate, Awards Ceremony and Community Celebration.

Yet Mickey knows that this type of change cannot happen without generating the necessary public will, as resistance aimed at systemic social transformation clearly requires the generation of a critical mass of support. To build this support, he knows he has to make his new knowledge intelligible and persuasive to others; this requires some attention to socially-driven expectations about how to communicate in particular settings (Gee, 1989). In a debate round, Mickey would have presented this first speech at a much faster rate. In this forum, in front of a culturally and linguistically diverse audience consisting of professors and faculty from the university as well as family and community members, Mickey slows down (albeit probably not as much as would be necessary for everyone in the audience to understand, but to Mickey's credit, his speech was still being timed) and incorporates many different rhetorical devices and discourses for persuasion. He uses repetition and rhetoric of agitation found in African American rhetoric(s) (Richardson & Jackson III, 2003, 2004). He uses a rhyming hook, "we went from African and Taíno to Boricua and Dominican all in a slave's time," a feature found in most Hip-Hop songs. He gesticulates to accentuate points "like a skilled emcee," as Dr. Emdin remarked later at the awards ceremony during his keynote address. Mickey wears khakis and a pressed white button down dress shirt, common professional (or church) attire. He doesn't rely on large block quotes and scripted ideas like what might be found in a traditional debate round; instead, he has much more limited block quotes and employs the academic discourse of paraphrasing and synthesizing multiple sources to create something new. As DSRB explained to the debaters on the first day of the institute, the aim of the institute was to support the students in developing a deeper understanding of theories, concepts and empirical knowledge as well as to produce new knowledge, not to subject students to rote memorization or the overreliance on block quotes when composing a text (unlike what I have seen practiced by most debaters over the 20 years I have been in the activity). DSRB explained to the young scholars that new knowledge production requires having an extended conversation with other scholars, reading and writing with, between, and against texts:

> When we say *regurgitation* of knowledge versus the creation of *new* knowledge, we're talking about this relationship between *reading* and *engaging* academic authors versus regurgitating those authors, versus *engaging* those authors; and when you engage scholarly authors, you're not regurgitating what they say, you are looking to at where the hole is in their author's argument and how you can feel it. You may read an author's entire text and be like this author is *amazing* until they get to this point and they are unable to answer *this* question and here is my answer to that question that *they* are unable to answer. *Your scholarship* fills a hole, which means there is something that *isn't being said* that *should be*, right. That's how you produce new scholarship. (personal communication, June 28, 2012)

In their quest to produce new and powerful scholarship, Mickey and John made many revisions to their case and welcomed constructive feedback as they saw their composition as an art form that could always be improved (Lipstein & Renniger, 2007). On July 9, 2012, Mickey emailed me his view of the annual resolution that contained the seed for *No Culture Left Behind*. After researching about the history of inequalities magnified by transportation infrastructure investment in the United States, and by personally observing the social injustices surging in the aftermath of transportation infrastructure development in the United States—like the Robert Moses' Cross-Bronx expressway that carved through the heart of the South Bronx, forcing thousands of residents from their homes, displacing micro businesses, and setting in motion middle-class White-flight that transformed the South Bronx into the most impoverished area in the country, with the brunt of the devastation landing on the backs of poor, Black and Brown residents—Mickey explained how he and John thought that a traditional affirmative case using the actor of the United States federal government to increase transportation investment was likely to "promote certain institutions of racism, capitalism etc. which are hurtful to poc [people of color], low-income ppl [people], women, queer people etc." Instead, he and John suggested that they "take out the usfg and re-conceptualize the idea of investment." For this they wanted to "run a metaphor or non-traditional affirmation aff [affirmative] that takes a genealogical approach to infrastructure and how bodies are transported." To accomplish this, they were "going to use the book the house on mango street as a literary example of the modern struggle of Chicanas/Latinas in America such as gentrification, border disputes, and stigma etc" in order to "advocate the use of Latinidad as a way to resist this colonial domination and re-conceptualize our view of the resolution" for which they said they were "most likely use the "theory in flesh" as a methodology."

Granted, in his short email to me, Mickey did not qualify his premise by presenting instances to which others might point as evidence of how some federal government policies have resulted in what could be perceived as racial progress. However, it is not that Mickey did not consider these counter-arguments—he just disagreed with them. It is important to remember that Mickey is growing up in a time in which he saw the federal government's response (or more accurately lack thereof) to the utter devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina, in which Black people seemed completely disposable as they drowned, waded in feces, got shot by armed troops when trying to cross bridges, were shuttled into the Superdome where people were "raped in makeshift bathrooms" (Precious Yarborough, personal communication, 2006) and told for days on end to wait in line to be rescued by buses that would never come. Mickey is growing up in a time when there are more Black people behind bars than there were enslaved in 1850 (Alexander, 2010). Mickey is growing up in a time when Black and Brown bodies are detained in Guantanamo Bay without charge (a violation of the fourth Amendment of the U.S. constitution). Mickey is growing up in a time when Trayvon Martin is murdered for looking suspicious and Jordan Davis is gunned down for playing music. Mickey certainly demonstrates his disillusionment with policy reform, but, while debatable, his sentiment is not without warrant. When teams would cite the Civil Rights and the Voting Rights Acts as counter-warrants to Mickey and John's position in debate rounds, instead of agreeing that the efforts of the Civil Rights generation resulted in adequate racial progress, Mickey and John would refer to the murders of Trayvon Martin and Jordan Davis (not as isolated incidents), and cite Michelle Alexander's book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, as well as other literature from the social sciences on anti-Blackness (addressed later in this chapter), as evidence of how past federal government reforms and policies are a far cry from sufficient in tackling racial injustice in general and anti-Blackness specifically, and why the young scholars were suspicious of the possibility that they ever could be. And while one could take offense to what might seem like a disregard for the sacrifices and accomplishments made by countless African Americans throughout American history, one must remember that: (1) Mickey and John explicitly honored and shouted out their elders in *No Culture Left Behind;* (2) they are scholars growing in a particular moment in time in which the possibility of racial justice seems difficult to imagine given the gratuitous nature of racial violence (as opposed to isolated incidents of racial violence that are contingent upon a particular context); and (3) this is debate. Mickey and John are also trying to win their debate rounds, not just for their own sense of pride and personal victory, but because a win means that their types of arguments and modes of presentation will be represented in elimination rounds and in the upper echelons of competitive high school policy debate. A win is not just for John and Mickey but it is also for all of the Black and Latin@ debaters around the country who are trying to incorporate their own social locations, interests, cultures, hybrid language practices, multiple literacies, and critical arguments and performances around race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, citizenship, and social justice, into an activity that has historically lacked many of those (Fine, 2001; Reid-Brinkley, 2008; Reid-Brinkley, 2012; Wise, 2008). Furthermore, while some of the debaters' arguments might sound extreme or like over-generalizations, regardless of whether or not one agrees with the debaters' position, there is no value in dismissing them outright as just rhetoric or propaganda, as the arguments are evidenced by a substantial amount of scholarly and peer-reviewed research.

What also should not be overlooked is what the young scholars' language and literacy practices might make possible in the teaching of Englishes. Mickey and John demonstrate how young people can make connections between one young adult novel (in this case, *The House on Mango Street*) and their own lives and use it as a springboard for the creation of a well-researched, multimodal, written and oral composition. *No Culture Left Behind* expands academic discourse through the inclusion of non-dominant social, political, cultural and economic perspectives and histories based in empirical research and critical and social theories, supplemented with digital and multimodal texts including socially relevant documentaries and Hip-Hop. Furthermore, Mickey and John's case points to additional possibilities for composition that are afforded by freeing students to embrace multiple identities, the meshing of multiple languages, the inclusion of multiple textual forms and functions, and the use of multiple literacies in oral and written composition.

After attending academic skills, and topic and theory seminars, having discussions with faculty and peers, and engaging with additional texts that Mickey and John found while researching, on August 3, 2012, 20 days prior to the public debate, Mickey and John shared the first draft of *No Culture Left Behind*, which they initially titled "Cultural Infusion"—a much more benign and general title than the final. Instead of quoting Felipe Luciano, and instead of temporally orienting the audience, *Cultural Infusion* began with what later became the third paragraph of *No Culture Left Behind* when it was presented on August 25 (see Table 4; see also Appendix A for further comparison of the August 3 and August 25 texts).

Table 4

The Evolution of No Culture Left Behind Affirmative Debate Case

Paragraph	*No Culture Left Behind* (8/3/2012)	*No Culture Left Behind* (8/25/2012)
1	The transportation of people has always been in perpetuation La Pinta, La Nina y la Santa Maria were used as vehicles of transporting Tainos for 4 voyages Christopher Columbus, whose name literally means "Christ-bearing colonizer," wrote in his diary shortly after the landfall that he and his sailors saw "naked men" and womyn whom they found "very healthy-looking." From landing in the Bahamas, and sailing on to Cuba and Bohio renaming it Española, Columbus soon noted a widespread language	So this essay is called 'No Culture Left Behind.' In an essay about revolutionary activism, written in 1970, Felipe Luciano an ex-Young Lord argues passionately and I quote: "Colonialism has *messed up* our minds so *badly* that psychologically we don't even know who we *are* or where we came from. We reject our cultural values and basic human values by imitating that which is not natural to us and by stomping on our own reflection. We've been systematically taught to hate ourselves while being reminded *constantly* by racist America that we ain't her

	and system of beliefs and lifeways. Conferring with various *caciques* he heard them call themselves "Taino.	kind of people either. Puerto Ricans suffer both racially and culturally.” So first, we bring it back to 1492. Christopher Columbus, whose name literally means, Christ-bearing colonizer, wrote in his diary that he and his sailors saw ‘naked men’ and womyn whom they found ‘very healthy looking.’ From landing at the Bahamas, and sailing onto Cuba and Bohio, renaming it Española, Columbus soon noted a widespread language and systems of beliefs and ways of life. Conferring with various *caciques* he heard them call themselves "Taino.”
2	In the middle passage the Slave triangle enslaved millions of Africans Nearly 57% of all Africans went to Brazil and Colonies in what would become Latino America And about 20% of Africans went to the colonies in North America The problem is these people came in one way and came out another Just like taino’s where first strong “healthy people” who held strong ties with Nature where now showcased for European society The slaves went in African and came out Black 21st century America continues the discourse of Detaching the body and the culture	La Pinta, la Niña, y la Santa Maria were used as vehicles for transporting Taínos for four voyages. In the middle *passage*, the slave trade enslaved millions of Africans. Nearly 57% of all Africans went to Brazil and Colonies in what would become Latin America. And about 20% of Africans went to the colonies in North America. The problem is these people came in one way and came out another. Just like Taíno’s were first strong “healthy people” who held strong ties with nature were now showcased for European society. The slaves went in African and came out black.

Table 4. The Evolution of No Culture Left Behind Affirmative Case.

Consider another example of how Mickey and John used Dylan Rodriguez’ book *Suspended apocalypse: White supremacy, genocide, and the Filipino condition*. On August 3, what Mickey and John would read in their debate rounds is the bolded print or tagline at the top, the author’s last name and date of publication, and then the highlighted portions from Rodriguez’ book versus the paraphrased rendering of Rodriquez’ text presented on August 25 (see Table 5).

Table 5

Comparison of Culture Infusion and No Culture Left Behind Debate Cases

Cultural Infusion (8/3/2012)	*No Culture Left Behind (8/25/2012)*
It’s always been the pedagogical mission of white modernity to perpetuate the liquidation of the other –Gentrification, assimilation	That is the same liquidation of culture that has been in perpetuation since the

and murder are only tools of white supremacy –just another form of EMERGENCY evacuation from our land **Rodriguez 10**(Dylan Rodriguez is associate professor of ethnic studies at the University of California, Riverside. Suspended Apocalypse: White Supremacy, Genocide, and the Filipino Condition PG# 143-144 G.L) **The pedagogical mission of white modernity, advancing in and through the white supremacist institutionality of colonialism and the violent displacements of its transplanted social forms, is persistent and clear: within the genealogy of genocide**, the production of social truth simultaneously authorizes mass-scale killing while inscribing the **historical death of indigenous cultures and communities as the precondition for a backward people's authentic** (modern) **freedom and their access to the rational faculties of** (political and subjective) **self-government.** The analytical gap that erases genocide as the condition of the Filipino-American relation – and hence as the material historical premise of Filipino American discourse in its various forms – **also rests on a false categorical distinction between physical killing and cultural death. Narrow conceptions of colonial conquest, even when conceding the historical possibility of mass-scaled population liquidation, proceed as if the logic of white supremacist colonization's genocidal capacities is centrally** (or even exclusively) **fixed on the realm of the physical** body, culminating in contained fashion with the violent end of the native's functioning biological husk. To conceptualize **white supremacist** conquest through a more dynamic and dense genealogical **notion of genocide** as archive, however, **refocuses the attention of the historical present on modalities of disruption and/or forced liquidation of indigenous cultural institutions** and their modes of social organizations, during and beyond the designated moments of intensified genocidal mobilization. This framing suggests a historical conception of “death” that, in resonance with a complex and historically nuanced notion of genocide, disassembles the reifications of **the cultural formations, bodies, and historical subjects that are the focal targets of white supremacist civilization-building. The cultural formation, body, and historical subject of racist genocide** (the very same that survive and may even at times flourish within genocide's epochal enabling of white supremacist institutionalities, from neocolonial government to postcolonial social formation) **may “live” perpetually in a condition of historical death that is the essential global racial condition of succeeding social forms.**	birth of Western metaphysics. Dylan Rodriguez contextualizes the framing of cultural genocide when he says that this has always been the pedagogical mission of Western metaphysics. Gentrification and assimilation are just tools of White supremacy—it’s only a means to an end, the end being successful cultural genocide. He analyzes the genealogy of genocide to make people understand the historical death of indigenous culture and communities as a precondition for physical genocide that came after. He also states that Western metaphysics relies on a false distinction between physical and cultural death, failing to see that they are the same thing because they are both facets of white nation building.

Table 5. *Comparison of* Cultural Infusion and No Culture Left Behind *Affirmative Debate Cases.*

The debaters had made significant changes to their first affirmative constructive (1AC) case over the course of 20 days.

Responding to the final version of the 1AC and the subsequent debate speeches that followed in the public debate, was Dr. Chris Emdin, the keynote speaker for the awards ceremony who began by praising the youth’s brilliance, comparing their “intellectual depth and social analysis" and sophisticated use of language as beyond the abilities graduate students in his classes:

> Very very rarely am I rendered at a loss for words, um, and every time that I get inside a space with the scholars that have been a part this program, I leave the place just floored by the brilliance. And so today, as I sat in the back and listened to a bunch of the talks, I was like, they floored me before, so I'm kinda like prepared for it, ya know what a mean? I'm not gonna be just amazed. And once again, I was completely completely completely amazed. Initially my part I want to share with you is just to tell you how dope I think you are, that you are beyond amazing. The line earlier about what graduate students do and what doctoral students do in comparison to what you do, I was just gasping. I have students in my classes who could not begin to reach the level of intellectual depth and social analysis that you guys say. They can't even say 'disposability of the black body'. They can't even say those terms. The fact that not only you can you say them, but you articulate them brilliantly and through your words, it's so clear that you know what they mean and it speaks and stands for something, is beyond me. And now I just want to put this whole thing in perspective.

Earlier in the day, Emdin attended a talk sponsored by Hot 97, the city's main Hip-Hop station. The talk was at a high school in the area and on the stage was an established Hip-Hop artist from Harlem dialoguing with other rappers and scholars "talking about Hip-Hop and sending messages to our young people and understanding the depth of violence in our communities." Emdin said that as he listened to the speakers and the Q&A, he heard what definitely seemed to be the speakers pushing for an agenda for Black and Brown people. And then Emdin got to the ILDI awards ceremony and community celebration:

> And then I sit back here and I realize that you are hope. You are all that's left. Cus as I sat back there I was able to reflect back on what I was listening to a few minutes ago from who was categorized as orators for our community, these were the emcees and the congress people and the radio station DJs from the big stations and they were just spinning their wheels in conversations about ignorance. They were just spinning their wheels in braggadocio about who they are and what they can do. And they were trying to come up with solutions for problems that plague our community. And it was just spinning their wheels and not going anywhere. And at the end of the event I left frustration and thought well at least they tried. And then I sit here and I listen to you I realize that, you're the hope. You're all that's left. The people that we position to be the ones who speak for us, have failed us because they fail to focus on the needs of people and you are talking about the exact issues that they should be, in a way that is more complex than any of them can.

The debaters are nodding their heads in agreement, as much of what Emdin is saying reflects what they have said in their debate speeches. At the same time, the debaters have been working with—and publicly shout out as exceptional examples in their debate rounds—a dedicated and socially responsible group of adults who are Hip-Hop artists, policy makers, professors, and college debate coaches who are creating local programs and policies that seem to be making concrete improvements in the lives and Black and Brown young people (DevRock and Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle in Baltimore, Maryland and Councilmember Jael Myrick in Richmond, California, as two examples). Yet as these role models seem to be exceptions rather than the rule (and they also demonstrate the complex nature of politics and the contradictions, tensions and differences between local and large-scale reforms and political action), Dr. Emdin echoes the young scholars' concerns over the ways in which many of those who are in power are failing to substantively and meaningfully address the interests and needs of the people they are supposed to represent (failing to adequately address homelessness, unemployment and underemployment, inequalities in wages, lack of access to healthy and nutritious food, clean water and health care, protection from and legal redress for racial profiling, police brutality, and racial, ethnic, and gender-based discrimination, educational inequalities, and the list goes on). Emdin commends the debaters for doing complex public intellectual work and advocacy that should be being done by many of those in power who are supposed to represent the young scholars' interests:

> The people that we position to be the ones who speak for us, have failed us because they fail to focus on the needs of people and you are talking about the exact issues that they should be, in a way that is more complex than any of them can. And let me tell you about the levels. And let me tell you about all of the levels that you do it.

Dr. Emdin goes on to testify about the youth's intellectual rigor demonstrated in their well-researched arguments, and in the depth and breadth of their knowledge around the issues being debated. He tells them, "So first of all is that you just spit more knowledge. The information that you're giving surpasses any information that anybody can do. So that's the first level." He praises the level of complexity in the young scholars' arguments and debating, their linguistic and discursive dexterity, and their language precision:

> the level of complexity, your ability to put in a vast amount of information into that small of a space rivals any emcee I've ever heard on this planet. Big Pun is in his grave like, woooo! Like did you hear that?! So not only did you do a great job on the information, but it's also your ability to deliver that that's mind-boggling.

Emdin recognizes how the young scholars are blending multiple discourses, literacies, and languages—including Hip-Hop culture—in powerful ways to expand academic discourse, "carving out a new academic and intellectual space." He likens their use of oral language with the ability to move the crowd like a skilled emcee, while their "brain is movin like a professor," and their "body is movin like a scientist," and their words are "venom. It's fire." Because the debaters are able to do all of that simultaneously, he tells them this "means that you are hope. You are the future."

> ...you are carving out a new academic and intellectual space. The fact that you're talking about debate but you're merging Hip-Hop: that as you present, your hands are movin like an emcee, but your brain is movin like a professor and your body is movin like a scientist and your words are speaking like like like like like—it's venom. It's fire. The fact that you can do all of that once, means that you are hope. You are the future.

As he wraps up, he reminds them not to let anyone undermine their brilliance because what they have inside of them, and what they have shared with the community "surpasses anything that is out there." And so in every space they must navigate throughout their lives, and whatever they decide to do in life, he reinforces that they must know they are trailblazers. They are brilliance. They are the future. They are hope:

> And so, as I leave you here today, all I want to say to you is this. Do not ever let anyone undermine your brilliance. The display that you have shown today shows that what you have inside of you, what you have given to us, surpasses anything that is out there. And as you go forth in all these spaces you go in your life when you decide to be a scientist or a mathematician, or a poet or an emcee, whatever realm it is, you are a trailblazer. You are brilliance. You are the future. You are hope.

As Shakiya and Terrance would say, they are Black Gold. But Mickey didn't see things the same way.

"The Factness of Blackness"

Jay and Terrance clarified in their *Reparations* case that their argument is not "a fight for the oppression Olympics" but that it is rather an acknowledgement of how "there is a distinct difference in the experience of the Black body" (Jay & Terrance, 2012). To further illustrate the context of this argument, and to highlight the way in which the focal participants in this research were leveraging their language and literacies skills that they had been developing in debate, I turn to *The Factness of Blackness* (see Figure 22), an essay that Mickey wrote in the wake of Jordan Davis being gunned down and murdered by a White man for Davis' music being too loud. Mickey shared it with me in an interest of creating a chapbook featuring some of the ILDI debaters' original compositions. Mickey draws upon his deep engagement with everything he could read, listen to, watch, annotate, and synthesize around anti-Blackness over the summer of 2012, including extensive conversations with Rashad Evans (a lawyer by training and also one of the most successful Black debaters and coaches in the U.S., who Mickey and John recruited to coach them after they began working with him at the IDLI 2012 summer institute), to situate the murder of Jordan Davis and Trayvon Martin in the context of anti-Blackness. Mickey begins his essay with a quote by Frank B. Wilderson III, a professor of Drama and African American Studies at the University of California, Irvine. Mickey follows this quote with a placeholder for his abstract, for which he wrote in brackets: “to be added after I’ve finished.” Mickey then follows this with a structured essay that demonstrates an impressive understanding of academic discourse including: (1) how some academics will leverage quotes at the beginning of articles to illustrate a critical point in their arguments to follow; (2) that academic essays have abstracts (he learned this by reading peer-reviewed journal articles); (3) that academic articles have headings and subheadings for organizing content; (4) the importance of using supporting evidence to warrant claims; (5) the use of in-text citations as well as direct quotes from books and periodicals; (6) drawing connections between theories and examples from his own observations about the subject matter; (7) the use of endnotes; (8) a work cited page; (9) presenting (some) alternate viewpoints; (10) having a clear thesis; (11) using vocabulary and sentence variety; (12) having a command of Dominant American English; and (13) the ability to synthesize a wide-range of texts in order to compose something new. Furthermore, in addition to using academic evidence, Mickey also cites and quotes Hip-Hop artist, Lupe Fiasco, demonstrating his awareness that one doesn’t have to have a PhD to be an intellectual and to have something to say that is quotable for an academic essay. (Our Hip-Hop artist-pedagogues been droppin knowledge about anti-Blackness, afro-pessimism, and afro-optimism, and I hadn’t made the connection until

Mickey and John broke down afro-pessimism and anti-Blackness over dinner with a group of UDL debaters and coaches at the end of a national high school debate tournament in December of 2012).

Despite Mickey's demonstrated awareness of some features of academic discourse as well as bringing his unique spin to bare, as Shakiya and Terrance will demonstrate in the cases they ran their junior and senior year, we can certainly critique Mickey's essay for making over-generalizations that at times border on essentialism, and for being too quick to dismiss alternate viewpoints (as in his argument about the Civil Rights Movement and his silence on voluntary immigrants from Africa and the existence of an African past before the Middle Passage). At the same time, keep in mind that Mickey is 16 when he writes this, and, he didn't have a chance to finish the essay as other obligations emerged that (rightfully) took priority. Additionally, I am persuaded by Lupe's bar that Mickey quotes, that "silence is worse than all the violence," because silence undergirds and makes possible the sustenance of anti-Blackness about which a 16-year-old can accurately observe that "we are talking about seventeen-year-old children who leave their house, and never come back" (Mickey, December 8, 2012). Our youth need platforms to speak about their pain, their hopes and fears, and their rage. And we need to create spaces to hear them while remembering that there may be young people in our classrooms for whom funerals are more common than birthdays, eviction notices more common than living wages, and scraping for food and living in constant awareness of imminent death is a normalized reality. There needs to be a space for our young scholars and leaders to take these realities and use them as resources for reading, writing, creating, speaking out, and for forging spaces of social life where they are free to see and be *Black Gold*.

Figure 22. Mickey's Essay, "The Factness of Blackness"

The Factness of Blackness: The Social Death of the Slave in "Modern" America

- by Mickey, December 8, 2012

> *White supremacy's despotic irrationality is as foundational to American institutionality as capitalism's symbolic rationality because, as Cornel West writes, it…dictates the limits of the operation of American democracy – with black folk the indispensable sacrificial lamb vital to its sustenance. Hence black subordination constitutes the necessary condition for the flourishing of American democracy, the tragic prerequisite for America itself…. from the incoherence of Black Death, America generates the coherence of White life.*
>
> - Dr. Frank B. Wilderson III, "Gramsci's Black Marx: Whither the Slave in Civil Society?"

I. Abstract

[to be added after I've finished]

II. The Rhetoric of Salvation and Progress: Black Freedom from Slavery?

In the time of the so-called "Modern"[1] America, where we have a Black president who has been elected to a second term, we have fallen victim to the same old lie: that America is in a post-racial state where everyone is equal, and that the seeds of Anti-Blackness and Slavery have been thrown out in favor of a true democracy. In other words, we have become passive in the face of reality in favor of the hoax, the lie that we have labeled "progress and salvation"[2]. I contend that this belief is not only flawed but misunderstands the very functions of American Democracy, because it misses what is essential about American politics, the position of the Black as a Slave. Yet we champion the re-election of President Barrack Obama, and we champion the passage of things like Affirmative Action, as though we have created some long-term change and broken down racial barriers for an entire community of people. We must realize that the very movements we have been championing have not challenged the position of the Black as a Slave.

Nothing remotely successful has occurred under the guise of The Civil Rights Movement or the election of President Obama. In other words, put all this progress-mongering aside, and you will see the horrific truth. Police brutality, HIV infection, substandard housing/schooling, being turned away at the polls, and of course gratuitous violence still constitutes the daily experience of Black life (Wilderson, 2010, p.10). Now of course, many will disagree with these claims and label Afro-Pessimists such as myself as those who can't/won't accept that America is changing for the better, taking "steps in the right direction"[3]. My main thesis here is that, all the movements we have championed as progressive and radical have only challenged the conditions of slavery as opposed to the position. No matter what movement pseudo-activists can cite, one can point to the everyday lived experiences in the hood and say *there's your change*, and you will be forced to see the real truth. The Black is still seen as a Slave, still treated as an object, and still subject to the same gratuitous violence for the fact that they are Black.

Blackness is Slaveness; there is no distinction within Civil Society. In fact, the onus is not one who posits this claim, rather the onus is on the one who challenges this claim, and believes that Blackness does not equal Slaveness (Wilderson, 2010, p.10). First, let's begin with the defining factors of Slavery according to Orlando Patterson (1982) in his book *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*:

(1) *Natal Alienation* – From birth, Blacks are in antagonism with their own body, and void of any kinship structure. Blackness is defined only by the devastation that created it, namely the Middle Passage, or in other words, Black people are a past without a heritage, as they cannot trace their roots back to Africa, but only to a boat which brought their ancestors here.

(2) *Gratuitous Violence* – Black people are open to violence everywhere they go just for the fact that they are Black. Recent examples would be the shootings of both Trayvon Martin and Jordan Davis. These two boys were shot for no other reason, than the fact that their Blackness invoked a sense of anxiety in both of the "White Vigilantes" as I call them (even though Zimmerman is Latino), causing them to take immediate action.

(3) *General Dishonor* – Everywhere you go in the world, whether it be Asia, Europe, America, Australia etc. the worst thing to be in this world, is Black. It is a collective tacit agreement that Africa is the land of Slaves, and that Blackness is a mark of inferiority. Everywhere a Black walks, their Blackness makes them lesser than every other being within that room.

The thing that makes Blackness or Black-suffering unique is that it is not an experiential question, rather it is ontological (Wilderson, 20120, p.22). In other words, Black suffering cannot be reduced to one instance of oppression (e.g. The Middle Passage, Slavery, Segregation). Black people don't suffer because they don't have equal job opportunities or inequitable investment in transportation infrastructure; Black people suffer for the very fact that they are Black. Therefore, the focus on certain instances of discrimination doesn't truly address the problem of Anti-Blackness. Blackness is ontological, because it is inescapable, it is essential to one's very being, as opposed to other forms of identity. For example, someone can be Black and queer, however Queerness is a performativity. When that person walks into the room, they can hide their Queerness, but they cannot escape their Blackness – indeed that person cannot scrape their skin off and call themselves white – once that person walks into the room, they are seen as Black before the others in the room know their name.

A central preoccupation of black culture is that of confronting candidly the ontological wounds, psychic scars, and existential bruises of black people while fending off insanity and self annihilation. This is why the "ur-text" of black culture is neither a word nor a book, not and architectural monument or a legal brief. Instead, it is a guttural cry and a wrenching moan -- a cry not so much for help as for home, a moan less out of complaint than for recognition. Thus, the Black subject position in America is an antagonism, a demand that cannot be satisfied through a transfer of ownership/organization of existing rubrics (West, 1996, p.80-81).

Thus, our measure of success cannot be of one focused on the gain and/or reversals in struggles with the state and civil society (Wilderson, 2010, p.10). We must call into question the very constructs of Life, of Humanity, of America itself to understand and highlight the antagonistic relationship the Black holds to the world itself. We must understand that from the incoherence of Black Death, we gain the coherence of White life, that Blackness is the zero-point of identity, the lack, the absence of being, and finally the fungible object which can be treated as a commodity.

III. The Reality of Social Death: Trayvon Martin and Jordan Davis

In recent times, the public has been in shock over the death of Trayvon Martin and Jordan Davis. It is not that we have never seen Black Death before, rather I believe, we are in shock at the ridiculousness of how these Black men (they really were just seventeen-year-old boys) are killed, and the absurd use of laws such as *Stand Your Ground* in Florida even in 2012, after the promise of equality and the call to a post-racial America. Yet, you hear these actions rationalized by the Conservative News Media, notably Fox News[4] (I'm thinking of Glenn Beck and Bill O'Reilly) via the use of "smear campaigns" in which the character of Trayvon Martin, specifically, was attacked and the deceased young man was made to look like the stereotypical *gone-wrong-wanna-be-gangster-weed-smoking* Black teenager.

This campaign had one purpose, to make Trayvon Martin look like another police report –"6'2 average Black Male"— who got killed because he was so suspicious. In other words, the media and individual racists sought to connect Trayvon Martin, to every stereotype of Black people in the book, because that scares White people. If the public is scared just by the sight of Trayvon, then it allows them to justify Zimmerman killing him; because you know *He was huge. I would be scared too if I saw him in the street*. What does this reveal? That the reason Trayvon died is because he was Black (Wise 2012). Honestly, no one can deny that the reason Trayvon looked suspect is because he was a Black man wearing a hoodie and because his Blackness automatically made him a target of gratuitous violence.

Blackness makes one seen as so low, as an object, that they are no longer human with any relations; Blacks are now just like a chair, open to criticism and destruction. As Tim Wise (2012) notes:

> Trayvon Martin is not an inkblot, the meaning of which is yours to interpret.
> He is not a walking Rorschach[5], whom one is free to see however one wishes.
> He was not put on this Earth to be deciphered by you, dissected by you, problematized by you, labeled by you, slandered by you, or shot by one who had done all those things to his seventeen-year old black body before you even knew his name.

The words "before you even knew his name" reveal the factness of Blackness. That to be Black means you are already dead (socially), and therefore it is not a problem to kill you (physically), because your existence doesn't mean anything in the first place. This get back to the point, that Blackness and/or Black Suffering is ontological, because Blackness is inescapable and essential to one's being, that before anyone knows your name, they can invoke negative stereotypes based on your Blackness.

Similarly, the tragic death of Jordan Davis is a product of the same seeds of Anti-Blackness, and the same Social Death experienced by Blacks. If you look at why Jordan Davis died, you hear that a White man shot him because his music was too loud. What that conveys to me, is that some White man heard a bunch of Black men in a car blasting their music in the middle of a gas station, and was angered because their music was too loud, Right? Then this White man decides to go over there and tell them to lower their music; but what he was really asking was for them to turn down the volume on their Blackness, and when they didn't, Jordan Davis took nine to the chest as punishment.

Though the death of Trayvon Martin and Jordan Davis are both tragic events, we must not forget that there are multiple Trayvon's and Jordan's every single day[6]. These are just two examples, in a cemetery of Black murder. As Aime Ellis (2011) points out, signs of Social Death are everywhere apparent in the acts of policing, threatening, killing, and the disenfranchising of Black men. Entire neighborhoods are red zoned, are seen as the Black area, which bears a striking similarity to Indigenous Reservations[7]. Neighborhoods like Ravenswood, Queensbridge, South Side of Jamaica, Harlem and areas in the South Bronx like Kingsbridge are open to overt police presence and police brutality due to the fact that the majority of the population is what? You guessed right, Black and Latin@. In these areas of overt police presence, Black men either end up dead or incarcerated in the thorniest of double binds ever created by the American system of Apartheid. Black men who live to see eighteen have to deal with the specter of imprisonment, as the next phase of life[8]; almost as a Black rite of passage into adulthood, except instead of going to CUNY, NYU, Columbia or any other College, most Blacks end up just getting an education in how to survive prison, and how to survive when you get back on the streets.

We are lacking a conceptual analysis of why Black people are dying every single day on a large scale, and why this is allowed to happen. Dr. Tommy Curry interrogated this very issue on a talk show; he thunderously asserted that not only are we lacking in a conceptual analysis, but specifically in a historical, pessimistic analysis which implicates the good white liberals, as engaging in and endorsing the same systems and behavior which enables (pro-actively) the death of Blacks [emphasis on pessimistic]. He continued, with a reflection on how we praise all these authors, these Black liberal reformists, we idealize King, and the Black Panthers, but we never demand that these scholars confront the actual system (Anti-Blackness) which has produced the daily experiences of Black people. Dr. Curry's analysis is one that not only struck me as true, but as a conversation that needs to be had within any and all discursive spaces possible – especially in hyper-political spaces such as policy debate and our own classrooms – in order to really start an ontological interrogation of the real issue here.

What is being highlighted in these discussions is the issue of silence; like Lupe Fiasco says in his song *Words I Never Said* "I think that all the silence is worse than all the violence". We come to see that Black people are silent in the face of a continual genocide waged upon them every day, in a way never seen before. We have come to understand that White Supremacy functions under a "Racial Contract" in which White citizens tacitly agree to a world of white superiority/black inferiority (Mills, 1997, p. 14); I would also challenge Black scholars by asserting that Anti-Blackness functions under the tacit acceptance and passiveness of Black people. In other words, just as Whites are guilty of Anti-Blackness due to their silence in the face of this system, so are Blacks who are silent. George Yancy has asserted in his work *What White Looks Like* where he says "Whiteness constitutes an invisible knapsack of unearned assets" (pg. 7); well I would say that Black scholars that are silent on the issue of Anti-Blackness are guilty of helping to stuff the knapsack and make sure White people have their proverbial lunch money every morning.

The reality of social death is one that needs to be confronted, expressed, and interrogated. This is not a joke; we are talking about seventeen-year-old children who leave their house, and never come back. We're talking about seeing teenagers joining gangs in order to find that kinship that Blackness by its very definition lacks; we're talking about seeing Blacks taking to crack pipes and suicide to escape the horror of this life. We come to the reality that Black life is not lived in the world that the world lives in; it is underground, that Black life is within a Social Death (Sexton, 2012). Under Civil Society, this continual destruction through drugs, death, and incarceration will never end. This is why Blacks everyday of their lives are ready, and even romanticize death; because they know that in this world, their life quite literally doesn't mean shit, and anyone can come along and end it.

IV. The Cry of Black Culture: Hip Hop?

V. A Pessimistic Negation: The Position of the Unthought

VI. Conclusion

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Endnotes

[1] The idea of a "Modern" America does not apply to the Black, because Slavery isn't and can never be "new" or "modern", because the positions remain the same.

[2] There has been no progress or salvation to date, you can give a Slave a cot in the back of a shed to sleep in, but it doesn't change the fact that when they wake up in the morning, they're still on a plantation. That is the difference between changing the conditions of Slavery as opposed to the position of the Black as a Slave.

[3] I challenge the notion of a "step in the right direction" because it is used as a pacifier to the real struggle that must take place. The only right step, is the step you take when you're about to put a meat cleaver in your Master's head.

[4] The Liberal News Media cover-up and mitigation of the tension didn't serve much of a better service.

[5] Rorschach is a comic book figure whose face is a mask with an inkblot showing all the emotions he feels

[6] Trayvon Martin and Jordan Davis are just extreme examples of Blackness, but we must not make that the threshold. There are acts of Anti-Blackness every single day that must be confronted.

[7] There is a clear similar function of White Supremacy here. Black and Indigenous people were both given pieces of un-wanted land to live in, and die in.

[8] Michelle Alexander's The New Jim Crow does a great job of interrogating the way incarceration is used to disenfranchise Black Males everyday

Figure 22. "The Factness of Blackness" essay by Mickey, December 8, 2012.

Black Gold: Shakiya and Terrance at the National Urban Debate League Championship, April 20, 2013

This is hard but I speak the truth inspired to teach the youth.
- From *Black Gold* by Shakiya & Terrance

Shakiya and Terrance are at Georgetown University. They are one of two teams from their city's Urban Debate League (UDL) who were selected to compete at the annual National Urban Debate League Championship. They were excited to meet their fellow UDL debaters from around the country and share with them the debate case Shakiya and Terrance had created for the 2012-2013 national high school debate topic on transportation.

Shakiya and Terrance's case *Black Gold* begins with an audio clip from the introduction of Esperanza Spalding's music video to her song *Black Gold*. In Spalding's words that appeared on numerous press outlets upon the album's release on the first day of Black History Month:

> The song is singing to our African American heritage before slavery. Over the decades, so much of the strength in the African American community has seeded from resistance and endurance. I wanted to address the part of our heritage spanning back to pre-colonial Africa and the elements of Black pride that draw from our connection to our ancestors in their own land. I particularly wanted to create something that spoke to young boys.

The introduction to Spalding's video consists of a dialogue between a Black father and his two Black children that he has just picked up from school. He asks them what they learned that day and they tell him that they are starting World History and that, "Today we learned about Africa and tomorrow we're going to learn about Rome."

"Right, wow. So *one day* for Africa huh?" The father replies.

"I guess."

"So what did you learn?"

"That there were Pharaohs and big huge pyramids in Egypt."

"Uh huh."

“And that there are 86 countries on the continent and that a lot of slaves came from West Africa.”

“Oh *that’s* what you learned?”

“Yeah. And also that the oldest bones of humans was found there.”

“Were found there.”

“Huh?”

“Were found there.”

“Well did you learn that Africa was full of kings and queens and some of the first democratic societies were found in Africa?”

“Noooo.”

“Africa was full of thousands of languages and religions...and that some of the most amazing artists and scientists that ever walked the face of the earth lived in Africa?”

“Nooo.”

“And that man’s oldest relatives, like one of the most sustainable civilizations ever, started there in Africa and still lives there today actually. Did you learn any of that?”

“Nooo.”

“Okay, well after dinner we’re going to look at some of my African history books, okay?”

At that point the dialogue ends and Esperanza Spalding sings the song’s hook:

Hold your head as high as you can

High enough to see who you are little man.

Life sometimes is cold and cool

Baby no one else will tell you so remember that

You are Black Gold, Black Gold

You are Black Gold

As Esperanza Spalding sings, Shakiya smiles and she and Terrance begin mouthing the words to the song. They are enjoying themselves.

Now maybe no one else has told you so
But you're golden, baby
Black Gold with a diamond soul
Think of all the strength you have in you
From the blood you carry within you
Ancient men, powerful men
Built us a civilization

Terrance fades out the music and Shakiya begins the first negative constructive (1NC) speech that she co-authored with Terrance. The speech begins with their reasons for speaking in public: "to teach the youth" to think critically about what they are debating that year. In a measured tone, Shakiya reads out loud:

> Every time *I* speak, I want the truth to come out. Every time *I* speak I want everyone to shiver. I want them to expect what I'm saying because they know its true, too and even if I get in trouble, aint that what we supposed to do? This is *hard* but I speak the truth inspired to teach the *youth*. *Transportation* means to transport anything and that assumes to transfer or convey from one place to *another*. Every time we move from point A to point B we engage in a loss of culture and identity but gain more experiences that hurt us to strengthen us in unity. The resolution *demands* that we increase these same ideas but we continue to *skirt* the discussion of what has shaped our *past* and what we deal with in our *present*. *Africans* were transported from *queens* and *kings*, griots and sculptors, *men* and *womyn*[36] to someone's *property* until *death*. We *woke up* in the middle of the *night* to the sound of shrill screams and cries and hid the disease from our master's *eyes*. We stood and turned told our kin not to cry because if they shed a *tear* it was *us* who dies. We pulled and turned the soil, orally recitin our *history*, *black gold*. We *laid* the tracks for the transportation they needed so *John Henry* could die against their *wicked* machinery. We transported *fallen* soldiers from bed to tombstone and engraved their names in our hearts and prayed with *moonstones*. With our hands to the *sky* but still *dyin* on the *inside* because they *wanted* some *movement* so the dozen times witness became my eyes. No longer *sub-human*, we are now *unworldly* with bird feet and goat teeth made to be effin machines. *Rape* my wife, *hear* me scream, call my *daughter* the nigger queen. Everyone

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[36] Like Mickey and John's writing, "womyn" is how Shakiya and Terrance spelled what normally appears as "woman." This change in the spelling of womyn is to signal that womyn should not be a subset of or junior partner to "men," or males.

> *cries* tears but who cries *blood* tears, when our ducts are empty from the *burning sun*. The middle passage I *congratulate* you for *movement* but *not only* did you *displace* our *bodies* but had a genocidal *tournament*.

Like Mickey and John, Shakiya and Terrance demand attention to the way in which transportation has functioned historically for Africans who "were transported from queens and kings, griots and sculptors, men and womyn, to someone's property until death." Terrance and Shakiya go on to poetically illustrate the connections between the horrors of slavery and transportation while also calling attention to the fact that even as enslaved Africans toiled fields, laid down railroad tracks, and "transported fallen soldiers from bed to tombstone," they nevertheless maintained a connection to their African cultural legacies and ways of knowing—their *Black Gold*—through oral language—"orally recitin our history"—a practice that the young scholars embodied throughout their debate performance. They end their first verse by sarcastically congratulating the Middle Passage for its victorious transportation accomplishment saying, "not only did you displace our bodies but had a genocidal tournament."

The next portion of the 1AC brings the speech up to the present by referencing the dangerous and toxic realities the Black youth have to navigate as they move through the city's transportation infrastructure to go to school, work, and debate tournaments (gangs, drugs, sexual objectification, over policing, gun violence, and domestic violence) none of which Terrance and Shakiya say can be resolved by increasing transportation infrastructure investment—unless the youth can be transported out of those conditions completely:

> Now forget blood tears, do you see the Bloods and the Crips out here? But I have no fear. Stand my ground or bullets scrape my ear, cut me with *shears*. *Walk* down my block. Look there. Smoke dat pot do it do it. Scratch from foot to hair. I mean, I don't play Celo but the boys play with me, look at me with their eyes like I'm another *Black* ebony—I mean, I *try* and transport myself to a *happy* place but the *cop* sirens and *screams* of the *fiends* do not *care.* I mean, I *love* to be *loved* but what is love in a *heartless* world where neighbors get *sniped* walkin out their doors? I can say I'm a normal teenager but I mean a normal *Black* being cus my partner too lives this *horrible* fantasies. Will you ever feel

> me, see where I'm coming from because I know you can never *be me*, or tell me...when my mom get *slapped black bruises* on her *face* I mean she is *brown* skin so It was lookin fifty shades of *grey*. But no one was there with bucket to catch my *tears* and no one was there to stop my *father*. And no one was there to *transport* what really needed to be *transported*. But yes… *I like* mass transit, *I like* bicycles, *I like* airports, *I like* hydrogen because this will get me out the *hood*. The education I learn here will got me speakin that *good*. I will be able to beat my father with the words right out the hood and spell myself a mansion and put it by the pool. *Sike*! I had you really fooled I may be *Black* but I refused to be *tooled*. I'm *ignored* tell me my *words* are *worthless* but that aint cool. The only thing *worthless* is the money we gotta hide in our *shoes*.

The debaters signify (Gates, 1988; Lee, 1995, Richardson, 2003; Smitherman, 1977) on the national debate topic of transportation infrastructure investment and critique the education that their opponents routinely argue can only be attained by ascribing to—and forcing others to follow in step with—a “traditional” and more “predictable” interpretation of the topic.

Shakiya and Terrance argue that limiting the scope of what can be debated (and how it can be debated) by excluding a bidirectional reading of the resolution that allows for critical perspectives on transportation infrastructure investment, does not possess any a priori value or provide a “real world” education that would be the ticket out of racial, economic and social oppression: “the education I learn here will got me speakin that good I will be able to beat my father with the words right out the hood and spell myself a mansion and put it by the pool.” The debaters are also calling out anti-Black stereotypes embedded in *topicality* arguments that frame the young scholars as ignorant of the “actual” definitions of words and the meaning of phrases in the national high school debate resolution on increasing transportation investment infrastructure. Because Terrance and Shakiya don’t “really understand” what the resolution says, they have an *untopical* affirmative case, and as *topicality* is an a priori voting issue for the judge, the judge should functionally dismiss Terrance and Shakiya’s *Black Gold* case because with it being *untopical*, its “words [are] worthless.”

The speech then shifts to the young scholars poetically embodying their expressed reasons for using their language to get people to question what they think are normal ways of thinking, believing, valuing, acting, speaking, being, and behaving (Gee, 1989), and to contemplate Black lived experiences that might be unknown to their opponents and judges, especially those who have had very little contact Black people because they don't live, work, or go to school around Black people:

> I am *empowered*.
> I am not *complainin* only *relatin,*
> *Spittin* some lyrics that got you *contemplatin*
> Hear my lived *experiences*
> Let ya *education* start *deterioratin*
> Form some new ideas that aren't just time *alleviatin*.
> I am that source of *knowledge* backed by a *million ancestral authors*.
> Hear my *father* and my *father's father*
> and my *mother* and my *mother's mother*
> and my *sister* and my *brother* from another *mother*
> when I *scream* these *original sly keys*
> and interrupt ya spaces of *hegemony*.

When the debaters say, "Let ya education start deterioratin, form some new ideas that aren't just time alleviatin," Terrance and Shakiya frame themselves as educators whose teaching includes assisting others with questioning and deconstructing what they think they know, or how they are told to think, to make room for new, critical, and generative thinking—thoughts that are not "just time alleviatin," but ones that are "backed by a million ancestral authors" whose "original sly keys" can "interrupt ya spaces of hegemony." Terrance and Shakiya are calling for their peers to begin the painful process of unlearning racial stereotypes that manufacture, magnify, and vilify Black and Brown people living in poor urban areas, and recover from the historical amnesia that occludes the full and rich history and wealth springing from the African Diaspora and sweeps oppression under the rug as if it never was there. Shakiya and Terrance urge their peers to rethink what they think they know about what is important teach and learn in high school policy debate. Instead of assuming that one can design a well-researched policy proposal that can improve a transportation system that's "got single mothers movin from takin care of children to support from takin care of *children* to their *low payin* jobs to slave for the *system* to get its *feces* in *return*" Terrance and Shakiya are urging their peers to critically question the ideologies and epistemologies that can undergird policy proposals, because "It's easy to say let's fund for *this* and let's fund for *that* when we don't even know the people who we fundin to *work*—the lives they *live*, feelings that *lurk*." Like dead prez said on *They Schools*, Terrance and Shakiya want education that can is figuratively and literally elevatin; not until an affirmative team can demonstrate that they can "transport them out the hood," will Terrance and Shakiya be able to agree that the affirmative's "solvency[37]is good." Terrance and Shakiya express how they think that too many Black people are living and working in slave-like conditions; they still have their

> Hands and feet *shackled* as if things never *changed*. Projects are called just *those* because people within them are seen as nothing more than experimental to the government—enemies against enemies, bullets flyin and bodies *droppin*. And unless we're *shootin*, they don't *notice* us. When you wanna *transport* somethin transport me out the *hood* then maybe I can say ya solvency is *good.* Modern day transportation got single mothers movin from takin care of *children* to their *low payin* jobs to slave for the *system* to get its *feces* in *return*. It's easy to say let's fund for *this* and let's fund for *that* when we don't even know the people who we fundin to *work*—the lives they *live*, feelings that *lurk*. *Transportation* at this *day* and *age is not even safe*. I've *walked* home from a *debate* tournament late at *night* getting off the *train* not a cop in sight jus black people getting high, *guards up* adrenaline coursing through your veins because you don't know if you'll reach your home *alive*. Hearing faint voices behind you *askin* your *age* or saying the *obvious*, like, 'you don't *belong out here* it's not *safe*.' *Crowded buses* and *trains* filled wit *diversity* but how *oblivious* are you to the people that you *see*. It *seems* our *minds* are *old enough* to identify what someone *is*, but apparently we *still* don't know who they *are*.

Unless the affirmative's plan can "transport [Terrance and Shakiya] out the hood," or can transport single mothers so that they aren't just going to "low paying jobs to slave for the system to get its feces in return," or can make transportation home from a tournament actually safe for Shakiya and Terrance such that they aren't in the position where they say can honestly say, "you don't know if you'll reach your home alive," then the affirmative's plan does nothing to alter the life threatening realities that permeate the worlds in which Shakiya and Terrance live, work, learn, and play. As a result, they are unsurprisingly suspicious of any policy prescription that claims to improve the quality of life, especially if the researchers and policy makers—including the young people simulating them in debate rounds—fail to critically investigate *with* marginalized and oppressed people who are most affected by inequalities around transportation, to learn and listen to their needs, research, and ideas for change. Unless there is a critical engagement with "hood spaces and hood faces," as Jay would say, Terrance and Shakiya see transportation as "nothing but representation of the slave ships that transported all of us from our culture;" because Terrance and Shakiya argue that as people are transported from point A to point B, they are being transported to learn and work in a system that requires conformity to a dominant linguistic and cultural norms that can eat away the integrity and existence of non-dominant cultures and languages. Instead, the debaters are calling for spaces wherein they don't have to "code-switch" but can "be who we are and produce our own knowledge" and cultivate their knowledge of self—the 5th element of Hip-Hop—which Terrance and Shakiya say is necessary in order to "change what WE live":

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[37] "Solvency" is used as an adjective in debate used to describe a proposed policy's mechanism and ability to "solve" the problems the proposed policy is designed to address.

> Yet we *code switch* and *code switch* as we take off our sweats and put on our *uniforms* for *school,* then take *that off* and wear *slacks* for *work* and our *suit* for *interviews* as we transport and transport. But *where* can we be *who we are*, and produce *our own knowledge*? Today *transportation* is nothing but the *representation* of the *slave ships* that transported *all of us* from our *culture*. We need some 5th element of Hip-Hop, *knowledge* of *self*. We know who *we are*, so you can know who *we are*, so we can *change* what *WE live*.

Through a rhyming flow, Terrance and Shakiya explain how they are tired of hearing affirmative teams argue in debate rounds that their cases will "solve for [them]" (meaning solve the problems that Terrance and Shakiya experience). Terrance and Shakiya rhetorically ask "how they gone solve for me when they don't even know *me*, can't identify with a word I said while we wrap this round in our gold *sheet*?" "Round" has a double meaning here: as a shortened expression of both the adverb "around" and the noun "debate round." Gold sheet is a reference to debate case and knowledge production as *Black Gold*. If affirmative teams not only listen but really *hear* the arguments that Shakiya and Terrance are making in *Black Gold*, then it is doubtful that the affirmative would feel compelled to say that their *plan*, their policy prescription, would "solve for" Terrance and Shakiya because that policy was not designed as a result of critical and participatory action research done with Terrance and Shakiya. Furthermore, Shakiya and Terrance argue that when an affirmative team plays the game of debate as a simulation of federal policy making, that before being too quick to decide on taking one course of action, they must reflexively ask critical epistemological questions, like how do the authors of the evidence in the round come to know what they know? Whose voices and interests are included and represented and whose are not? Who benefits and who does not? And what is gained versus what is lost when the affirmative's agent of change is the federal government versus who the affirmative really is: two high school students who could position themselves as scholars, leaders and change-makers in their own right, without having to pretend to be someone that they are not.

> Apparently I'm an advantage, because all these 1AC's seem to solve for *me*.
> But little did I know that these affs[38] are what we really *need*.
> People want me to jump on affs like it's my trusty *steed*,
> but to hell wit all dat I prefer to walk on my *feet*.
> You want some authors that I don't know to tell me what I *need*.
> Then you wanna say they solve for *me*,
> but how they gone solve for me when they don't even know *me*,
> can't identify with a word I said while we wrap this round in our gold *sheet*. Everyone's
> 1ac is quote on quote chrome slick impenetrable to anything
> when they don't even know me
> All I hear's a bunch of theory because they already told me.

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[38] Abbreviation for affirmatives cases.

> 1…2…3…4…5.. years ago, I've heard it even before me.
> We solve for *heg,*[39] we solve for *econ,*[40] we solve for *warming,*[41] we solve for *you*—f*alse claims* with *fake judicial lanes.*
> All fairy tales in this debate community will be uncovered myths and fiat[42] exposed, the truth magnified and the greatest reality of the pain etched into Black people's lives will be discovered. Cases are regurgitation that doesn't do anything for the community. They should not be able to claim solvency with their methods. They are all stuck in a theoretical world where things will be wished away yet we condone it like fiat exists.
> Just take some time and scope in and break away these *chains*.
> The status quo's the same cause the 1AC's don't *change*.
> But when we rip open some *space* for *change* our thought is not the right *way*.
> But if they not *changin* where's the *ultimatum*?
> We are the choice, we are the option. That's what we *creatin.*

Anticipating that their opponents might call them out for an over-reliance on personal narratives and opinion, Terrance and Shakiya then reference Dr. Reid-Brinkley's (2008) argument derived from Louisville's "Three-Tiered-Methodology" that stresses the importance of incorporating personal narratives and organic intellectuals along with academic authors into the debate space in order for debaters to have a better method to more comprehensively evaluate truth claims and develop an understanding of the myriad threats facing oppressed people that are too often overlooked or dismissed by those in power and by those teaching and learning in educational spaces like debate:

> Doctor Shanara Reid-Brinkley already said it…we need to incorporate our identity in order to evaluate the real truth claims. And Warren and Fasset even went beyond this…when you don't incorporate and identity and become identity-less, that fluidity is an embodiment of Whiteness. That's why it is important for us to take into account the stories of those who have been a victim of the system and be marginalized. Way too often policies are ignoring those who it affects the most. Politics doesn't wanna listen cuz it *got no love* for us *ghetto children*. There's no place in the *hood* where people can voice

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[39] Hegemony (preservation of American Hegemony is what this is implying)
[40] Economic disadvantages
[41] Global warming
[42] "Fiat" refers to the common practice of teams assuming that an affirmative plan in which they say the federal government will take action to do x, y, and z (like the United States federal government will pass a policy that funds innovative renewable energy-based mass public transit in all major U.S. cities) will get passed (even though a normal procedure for the passage of a bill would include the possibilities of that the bill wouldn't pass in either the House and/or the Senate. Assuming that the affirmative team has "fiat" presumably frees up the affirmative and negative teams to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of passing the affirmative's plan, not whether or not it will actually get passed.

> their opinions, policies will never *succeed* unless they encounter *lived* experiences of growing up in *poverty*, living in *danger* of police brutality because of the way you look: pants low, hoodies on, in hopes to escape but seen as a menace to society... Hate crimes/racism: people have no understanding, no context of who anyone is, so we can only speculate and formulate our own opinions. So I know black people like basketball and football and *16 and Pregnant* and smashin hoes while chillin wit da bros and droppin out of college to get dough cuz thas what the TV told me, but what have *WE* told you?

Shakiya and Terrance argue that because "politics doesn't wanna listen cuz it got no love for us ghetto children," and because "there's no place in the hood where people can voice their opinions," their voices and issues are snuffed out of existence and replaced with stereotypes that frame young Black men as a "menace to society," stereotypes that are called upon by the likes of George Zimmerman as a justification for killing young Black men like Trayvon Martin. Granted, Terrance and Shakiya could work on how they quantify their major and minor premises to avoid the risk of sounding over-generalizing such that others dismiss their words and arguments. At the same time, keep in mind that this presentation of *Black Gold* is what Terrance and Shakiya would have presented in their first constructive speech; subsequent speeches would provide them with ample opportunities to further qualify their arguments. Aristotelian rhetoric aside, Terrance and Shakiya are emphasizing the importance of using language and literacies in competitive academic high school policy debate to investigate, discover, and publicize what might be often hidden or obscured from public view and civic and political discourse. Shakiya and Terrance argue that until people "encounter lived experiences of growing up in poverty" and can begin to feel the urgency behind eliminating the root causes of conditions in which people can be "living in danger of police brutality because of the way you look," then policies will never succeed in ameliorating the threats to the lives of Black children or fully dismantling the barriers to their future possibilities to thrive and grow into adults who can live a fulfilling and meaningful life.

Up until this point, *Black Gold* contains a series of indirections, as the debaters dance around the thesis of their argument before overtly proposing their advocacy (see Woodyard, 2003). Additionally, Terrance and Shakiya know that whoever ends up judging their debate round, has most likely never heard a case like *Black Gold*: with its radical and unabashed content; unconventional structure laden with Black rhetorical features; linguistic meshing of Black English, competitive academic policy debate jargon, Dominant American English, and Hip-Hop; and additional multimodal literacy practices including the playing of Jazz and the oral reading of a written speech. At the end of the first constructive speech, Terrance and Shakiya explain to the judge that they should vote for the team that demonstrates a better epistemological foundation for creating policies that can directly reflect the expressed social, economic, and political needs of Black people who are living in oppressive conditions. The judge is further advised to vote for the team that can also most effectively communicate these issues in such a way that would be intelligible to people inside and outside the debate community—they need to have Nommo, verve, soul—because change requires the ability to meet and move the people to action.

In his essay about the spiritual essence of African American rhetoric, Adisa A. Alkebulan (2003) discusses some of its aesthetic qualities. This rhetoric includes art that contains an epic memory of ancestral roots, language carrying complex ideas, and African sociocultural values including the high value placed on spoken arts making it such that speakers are expected to deliver speeches in a way that is aesthetically pleasing: “Africans, being the product of an oral tradition, attach music, poetry, and other verbal art forms to language because they are all means of creating, recreating, and maintaining African culture” (p. 35) and for making and negotiating social, cultural and political meaning and social understanding. To these ends, Shakiya and

Terrance advocate for an injection of *Black Gold*—their knowledge and their linguistic and cultural performance—into debate:

> This round is evaluated by who employs the best methodology towards more reflective polices and better forms of thought, while stylistically reaching more people inside and outside the debate space. That's why Terrance and I advocate for an increase in Black thought and Black lived experience—*Black Gold*—into the debate space in order to energize our *policies* to become *reflective* of not only to *one* group, but all.

In Black Gold, Shakiya and Terrance firmly locate themselves as a continuation of the past 300 years of African American commentary on liberation. In order for African American rhetoric to access it full power in the 21st century, Molefi Kete Asante (2003) identifies three necessary features: correctives, reconciliation, and challenges to White supremacy. Correctives are based upon reparations for African enslavement, and reconciliation arises out of the meaningful collective response to correctives. Asante also predicts that "the best rhetors will demonstrate reliance on the following emerging African American cultural themes: spirituality, musicality/rhythm, emotional vitality, resilience, humanism, communalism, orality and verbal expressiveness, realness, and soul style" (p. 288). Terrance and Shakiya's playful remixing of words, language meshing, and their original, poetic and creative spin on oral and written composition reflects that soul style of contemporary Black rhetors that embodies resilience, humanism, orality, verbal expression, honesty and sense of community rooted in the Diaspora.

With its focus on honoring the historical richness of Africans prior to the Middle Passage, *Black Gold* also reflects what Asante (2003) contends is necessary for rhetorics of freedom: "attention to the common cultural issues facing people of the African Diaspora that reaffirms a common quest for liberation from mental, cultural, intellectual, and economic oppression. It is only in this way that we remain the vanguard of freedom in the North American context" (p. 290). In Terrance's explanation of his argument in the cross-examination in a round with an Urban Debate League team from Denver, he explained that:

> **Terrance:** Transportation in and of itself is a form of violent inclusion, meaning every time that we transport from point A to point B we're engaging in a loss of culture, a loss of identity--we're forced to *marginalize our culture.* Like when you look at it *historically*. When we were transported during *that time period* we had to loose our identity, we were no longer Africans, we now became *Blacks* (the judge nods his head) and *African Americans*—whatever *that means*—and then we speak about it in *modern-day society* whenever we *transport*, we're supposed to *exclude who we are* and *become somebody new* and *assimilate into* the surroundings *around us*. And *every time* we transport, it's a *form of violence*.
>
> Next it's going to be focusing on *outside* the *domestic sphere*. Like in cross-ex when they *concede* that they *never change* the *structural conditions* of living for the *oppressed*, things like *projects* and *welfare* and issues *like that,* that are happening *domestically.* When they speak about folks improving the economy, like improving the economy for *who?* Right? *Because* we see that the economy is *not reflective* of *our ontological position.*
>
> And then *next* is going to be this idea of *ontology* versus a *material action*. So we need to question the *ontological reasoning why* we are actually *engaging* in this action before we can change the material reality. They move people from point A to point B and that may change their geographical location which is key—
> **Shakiya:** —but it doesn't change your ontological position of who you are in society in the *past* and *especially* in your history.

However, over the course of that tournament, and fairly representative of the responses that Terrance and Shakiya received from the majority of teams they debated their junior and senior year, teams said that Terrance and Shakiya should loose for running *Black Gold*. This plea to punish Terrance and Shakiya was rooted in the belief that it wasn't fair to allow Shakiya and Terrance to run a case like *Black Gold* because is wasn't "topical" enough; it wasn't "predictable," meaning teams can't adequately prepare to debate a case like *Black Gold* because they didn't think about it ahead of time, before the round or before the tournament, because *Black Gold* presumably isn't something that one would "normally" think about under the purview of the transportation topic.

More accurately predictable, Shakiya and Terrance's opponents argued that *Black Gold* was "too radical" to be appropriate for a debate round and that allowing cases like *Black Gold* was "bad for debate." To which Shakiya asked them, "So what are we doing that's bad for the debate community?" To which Denver answered, "we're at a debate tournament" and implied that tournaments require explicit terms of engagement to preserve competitive equity, in this case, certain limitations on the scope of what can be debated.

Still unclear as to how *Black Gold* destroys competitive equity and how it falls too far outside the purview of the national topic given how the case is centered around a critique of transportation infrastructure, Shakiya knows that what her opponents are saying is that a Black-centered case explodes the limits of the national topic and *that's* the real problem—she and Terrance shouldn't be talking about Blackness in debate. She asks Denver, "Okay, if we cannot speak Black-centered experiences *here* and *energizing* these policies in policy debate, where can we talk about it?"

Her opponents tell that she can speak "with the League director, the people who are in charge of the *resolution,*" and referring to the annual dinner hosted by the National Association of Urban Debate Leagues prior to the start of the UDL National Championship, "Last Thursday at our banquet where everyone was at, where you could have convinced more than just *us*." Clearly the Denver team realizes that one of Terrance and Shakiya's goals in composing *Black Gold* is to create systemic change. However, Terrance and Shakiya are trying to explain why debating *Black Gold* in their rounds at the tournament is fundamental to this systemic change.

Shakiya presses Denver: "Okay, so only *one site* and *one event* is good enough to speak about the Black-centered experiences and talk about reenergizing these policies?"

To their credit, Denver really tries to understand where Shakiya and Terrance are coming from as they try to answer Shakiya's question:

> **Denver**: Okay, let's see if my knowledge is correct. You're um, you're narrative is basically saying that we don't have um enough um Black perspective or African perspective in transportation which ultimately results in a lack of diversity, right? I mean, um culture, rather right?
> **Shakiya**: Okay—
> **Denver**: And now you're saying that we should adopt more of like a Black perspective in transportation infrastructure.
> **Shakiya**: Okay—
> **Denver**: The resolution doesn't say *anything* about that. So to according to my knowledge you are saying that we should *add that* to the resolution and focus more on—

Terrance jumps in to ask a question and clarify how he and Shakiya can win the round:

> **Terrance**: If we prove that the affirmative is *uniquely bad* for one or more bodies, is that a reason for you to loose? Like the plan text of the affirmative, or what the affirmative defends as the *discourse* of the 1AC, is *uniquely bad*, is that a reason for you to loose?
> **Denver**: I'm sorry, I don't, can you—(Denver is confused by Terrance's somewhat convoluted question).
> **Shakiya**: If we prove that the 1AC is flawed, do we win? (Shakiya oversimplifies the question).
> **Denver**: Well not yet. You haven't proved that we don't solve for our advantages, unless that's what you're saying, then yeah.
> **Shakiya**: Okay, so why are you questioning the Black perspective?
> **Denver**: We're not questioning the Black perspective.
> **Shakiya**: So why didn't you take upon yourself to talk about the Asian and Mexican experiences and not shun the Black experience?
> **Denver**: So why didn't we talk about our own perspectives?
> **Shakiya**: Yes.
> **Denver**: Because I didn't actually have time and I was running out of time but I have a poem, which I can read in the 1AR for you.

While I appreciate Terrance's cross-examination strategy to get Denver to answer yes to a question that Terrance feels would help him and Shakiya win their debate round (albeit his question is somewhat confusing, as is indicated by Denver's response), that is not what I want to focus on in the second part of this exchange. What really resonated with me, was Denver saying that they do not start from or include their own social locations in the debate round and do not make the connections between their own lives and experiences and the texts and arguments with which they are engaging because as the speaker explains: “I didn’t actually have time and I was running out of time but I have a poem, which I can read in the 1AR for you;” talking about his own social location, and how incorporating a poem reflecting that was tangential—something that he would do only if he had time. Perhaps this debater may not place a high value on situating his sociocultural location in the context of the debate round, which is why he is reluctant to read his poem; or possibly this debater merely needs to develop better time management skills such that he would make sure that he would have time to read his poem. Given the hundreds of debate rounds I’ve judged and watched, it is more likely that this young man is like the many other young people I’ve seen debate who are not encouraged to incorporate their sociocultural worlds, their various literacy practices, and the issues that directly affect them into their debating. Most debate teams run affirmative cases that have been selected by their coach based upon the coaches’ determination of the case’s ability to stand up to the possible onslaught of negative attacks. Coaches doing their best to guide their teams to victory, sounds like a normal and expected role for a coach. There is nothing inherently wrong with a coach wanting to do everything they can to support their team’s victory. However, prioritizing the goal of winning a debate round might occlude the importance of creating opportunities for young scholars to make meaningful connections with theories and research, and practice using, strengthening and extending all of their literacies by locating themselves, their interests, their poems, languages, and their original knowledge in the texts and ideas being engaged.

Over the last 20 years of participating in the activity of competitive academic high school policy debate, this disconnect between what the students are debating and who they are and how they are living, is one of the most frequent ways in which I have seen debaters loose their joy for debate and drop out. I imagine that this would come as no surprise to scholars like Gloria

Ladson-Billings, William Tate, and Geneva Gay who advocate for culturally relevant pedagogy, or Django Paris and A. Samy Alim (2014) who argue for a culturally sustaining pedagogy, or Christopher Emdin, who writes about reality pedagogy, or David Kirkland (2007; 2010), David Stoval (2006), or Ernest Morrell and Jeffery Duncan-Andrade (2002; 2008) who evidence their reasons for actively encouraging their students to leverage Hip-Hop in developing and applying academic and critical literacies. In their research, these scholars document how leveraging Hip-Hop culture in the classroom can reflect, honor, strengthen and can further develop empowered identities, and linguistic and cultural assets, and can serve as a bridge between students' sociocultural worlds, interests and discourses, and the texts, literacies and discourses that otherwise might be unfamiliar or appear to have no relevance to students' lives.

Composing *Black Gold*

Shakiya said that *Black Gold* was her favorite argument that she and Terrance ran while they were debating together:

> I do favor *Black Gold* a lot. I like *Love* and all, but I like *Black Gold* more because it wasn't cards for the entire AC.[43] So I like that better because we actually sat down and wrote it like over, I think, two nights or so. So we were on Oovoo like writing, he was asking questions. I answered it. And then with that we tailored it. I asked some questions, answered it. Like we tailored it together so it was *us*. You know? So it wasn't—it was good to have authors to rely upon to help understand what you're saying, but for the entire 1AC, it was just *us*, it was just what we experienced, what we'd been through and how it *affects us.* (personal communication, May 21, 2015)

Shakiya calls attention to several important literacy realities. First, in this particular literacy event, Shakiya and Terrance are reworking and reshaping written texts collaboratively and orally (Heath, 1993). She identifies the importance of being freed to produce new knowledge and not merely rely upon the regurgitated words produced by others (Freire, 1970). And her repetition of the use of "us" implies the importance of this new knowledge reflecting their voices, experiences, and subjectivities. Proponents of critical literacy consistently express concern over the fact that in traditional literacy instruction, students can lose their voices when producing texts, with students' voices swallowed by a deference to an assumption about what "counts" as literacy (Graff, 1982) or expert knowledge.

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[43] AC = Affirmative Constructive

Shakiya and Terrance are also employing multiple literacies (New London Group, 1996) in the production of the text. They are using a digital video call platform (Oovoo) to engage in a reflexive process of composition, dialoguing through written and spoken texts, fielding and answering questions, writing, fielding and answering questions, writing.

> I remember there was this one night and we stayed up *so many hours* with this case. I think it started with, he asked me a question of what do I see when I, you know, walk home from the train station or something. And then I wrote I see dudes on every corner or I see people asking for money. And then it turned into like an entire paragraph or a little bit more talking about how what we have in our neighborhoods; what we see affects us as who we are. And I think he wrote a section about not only what he sees in his home but what he sees in his community. That was another section. And then the end was talking about what we want to happen. So our goals and what we want to see. And then it was pretty much a case. And then we got a song to fill up the time in the eight minutes to help say what we wanted to say. (personal communication, May 21, 2015)

Beginning around 11pm, they used both Google Docs and Oovoo to co-construct their case and wrote late into the early hours of the next morning. With the Google Doc of their case pulled up, they simultaneously used the chat function on Oovoo to field and answer questions while typing up bullet points of their arguments on the Google Doc, which were then turned into paragraphs. Shakiya recounts:

> It was pretty easy actually! You know, I think that technology has evolved *so much.* With what we did was he would call me, right. And then we had the Google Doc open. He was on it and I was on it. And then we wrote bullet points of what we were writing and then transformed it into paragraphs. And then like on the Oovoo app itself there's like a little

> message box that we talked to each other through, so it was like a side bar from the Google Docs itself. (personal communication, May 21, 2015)

While giving me the rundown on this process, throughout her explanation Shakiya is laughing at all that was involved in composing the piece because she and Terrance were shifting back and forth between two digital platforms. She's also dramatically gesticulating to further punctuate the multiple platforms being used in developing *Black Gold*. Most of the composing was done by them typing up messages to one another. Not until the final product was coming together did they shift to the use of the spoken word:

> We never really spoke to each other even though we were face-to-face. That really never happened. We were really just typing and using the Oovoo side bar. I remember that much. Yeah. We never really spoke to each other. The only reason we really spoke was when it was like kind of coming together. So I had to read it, I had to read it over Oovoo and then we did it back and forth. That was the only time that we really spoke to each other. (personal communication, May 21, 2015)

I asked Shakiya to tell me about her motivation and purpose behind constructing *Black Gold*:

> There's a part that specifically talks about how my words are worthless, you know outside of debate, inside of debate. So you know putting it in the case itself, made me feel you know, *good* about you know what I'm trying to say, especially since I was the one who read the 1AC. There were certain parts where I highlighted and emphasized my voice. So it was good in that sense. And what it meant to me was that it was the actual truth because even though we both live in two different neighborhoods, we still live in Crow Hill. We still see the same thing even though we live in two different houses it just doesn't matter. We encounter these things daily, whether it be on our way to school, whether it be on our way to the city, or a friend's house, it's the same thing that we see. And then it also helps cus it was what was being advertised on TV, like *16 and Pregnant*, the teenage mom show. I remember I was up watching that when I wrote the 16 and pregnant, single parent, blah blah blah. And then how they only want you to be basketball players and football players and nothing more. And then you know the whole um what you the part where it was like when you come home from debate tournaments you know not a cop in sight, just dudes on the street you know, just doin whatever they want to do which is actually true cus that happened when we came back from the [Science

> Tournament], you know that really really long tournament, because I actually didn't really get home until after midnight and that was the only thing that id seen. You know its just *facts* that we encounter daily. So it was the actual Black living experiences. So the whole part about these policies really weren't made for us, they need to encounter lived experiences about what it means to be growing up in poverty or living in the hood. Yeah that was the *truth*. (personal communication, May 21, 2015)

Shakiya stresses the importance in having a way to rupture the silencing and misrepresentation of her voice and lived experiences in academic, public, and digital spaces. She explains that *Black Gold* was a way to deploy her language and literacies to fortify herself against those who tell her that her "words are worthless...outside of debate, inside of debate." Instead, she is able to compose an argument in which she can flip the script and represent herself and her words as *Black Gold*. Through written and oral language, she uses her *Black Gold* to expose the distorted images portrayed by the media that often stand as a proxy for the real thing. She was able to use her language and critical media literacy to publically debunk stereotypical representations of young Black women and men and call attention to all of the ways in which they were so much more that basketball players and football players, or destined to end up pregnant at 16. (To be sure, this is not meant to disparage any 16-year-olds who are pregnant; chastising and stereotyping young mothers is reprehensible and does nothing to serve anyone's interest except the small handful of companies and individuals who profit off of the backs of our most vulnerable populations.)

Black Gold also gave Shakiya the opportunity to share with others what she and Terrance faced on a daily basis and to publically call attention to how those issues are woefully ignored by those who are supposed to represent their interests in the political realm. And she slams the policies proposed inside and outside of debate rounds that purport to be for her benefit, as lacking a real understanding of what her actual lived experiences are—"*just facts"—a* prerequisite for any policy aiming to effectuate real change for her, Terrance, and their communities.

Additionally, instead of merely having to live in conditions of political disenfranchisement, neglect, danger, and poverty that civil actors seem to care very little about alleviating if they are not directly affected, Shakiya is able to write and expose those issues and use her compositions to develop intellectually, to engage in sociopolitical discussions and debates, to build her resume through winning debate rounds, to have new experiences like travelling to Washington D.C. and visit college campuses like Georgetown University, Harvard, and Yale. To be sure, no young person should have to live, learn and navigate spaces in which they feel unsafe, disrespected, devalued, dehumanized, neglected and dismissed by those who are supposed to protect them and help them grow, discover, and make use of their gifts, interests, intelligence, language, literacies, and dreams. Yet instead of having little to no spaces in which to investigate those realities, and instead of lacking ways to address and think about ameliorating those conditions, Shakiya is becoming a critical researcher who exposes social injustice in her city and calls out racial, gendered, classist, and ageist stereotypes propagated by the mass media and ignored by civil society, in a space in which others are forced to listen and hear her ideas for change. Shakiya takes her experiences with and observations of social injustice and transforms them into fuel for something that can benefit her. She uses the very same experiences that function as barriers to learning and living a healthy life, and no doubt still are, and uses them as assets; Shakiya's experiences become resources that she uses to explore transportation infrastructure and related inequities. Her experiences and observations become material about which to write and practice public speaking. Just like Hip-Hop emerged out of a burning city, so too did *Black Gold*.

The End of the Year Results

At the end of the 2013 Urban Debate League National Championship hosted at Georgetown University at which Shakiya and Terrance repped hard for *Black Gold*, they were undefeated in their five preliminary rounds. Shakiya was the 9th place speaker. Out of 150 total possible speaker points, Shakiya had 142.90 points; and, with 145.30, only 4.7 points off from being perfect, Terrance was the 1st place speaker.

The judges were impressed. One judge wrote the Reason for Decision (RFD) on his ballot for Round One (see Figure 23) as:

> The negative proved that the affirmative's epistemology was uniquely damaging in its discourse and in its solvency of their advantages. The affirmative provided no impact calculus and no alternative meta-philosophical paradigm to weigh their impacts with; nor did they challenge the negative's. Although the affirmative's advantage areas of "rape" and "econ" were persuasive, they failed to prove why they matter[44]. The negative clearly showed how the aff[45] linked to the neg's K,[46] which combined with their discussion on the role of the ballot convinced me of a negative win.

Another judge commented on Shakiya and Terrance's debating in the round writing that, "the quality of the arguments were engaging, relevant and well-informed." After the tournament, we also began receiving requests to share videos of Terrance and Shakiya's debating. One UDL executive director emailed me saying that "it will definitely benefit some youth in [our area] who are engaging with similar styles and ideas."

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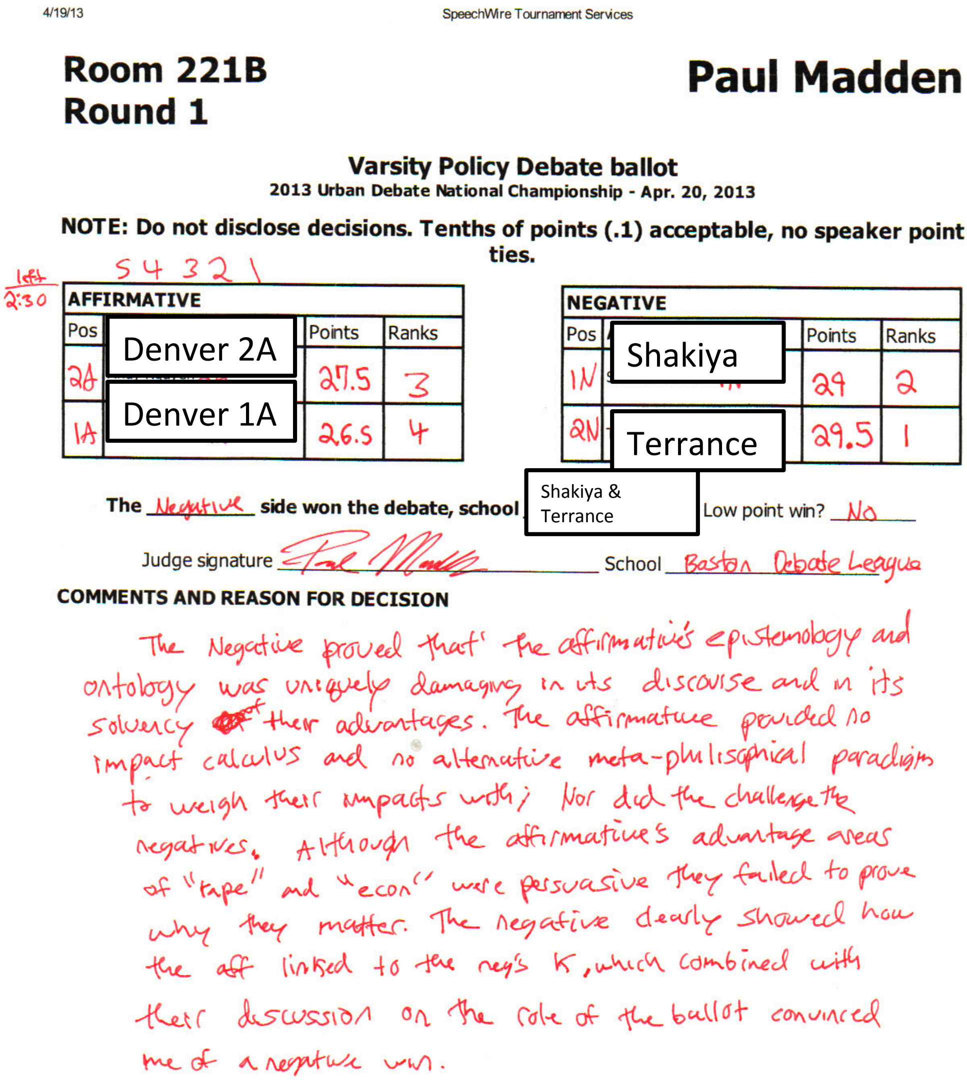
[44] I am very aware that this sounds appalling and morally bankrupt. I do not believe that the judge was saying that rape is something insignificant and should be taken lightly or not seriously addressed at a national, state, and local level; rather, he is saying that the affirmative team failed to explain how the judge was supposed to evaluate the affirmative's persuasive policy in the context of the negative's larger attack on the affirmative's epistemology; a further illumination of which probably requires a more substantial coverage of the details of that particular round, and more space than what footnotes afford.

[45] Aff is the abbreviation for affirmative.

[46] K is an abbreviation for a Kritik (pronounced like critique and it certainly is that but more). The K in the spelling is in recognition of Heidegger's meditation on ontological and epistemological questions.

Figure 22. Round One Ballot from the 2013 UDL National Championship



4/19/13 SpeechWire Tournament Services

Room 221B
Round 1

Paul Madden

Varsity Policy Debate ballot
2013 Urban Debate National Championship - Apr. 20, 2013

NOTE: Do not disclose decisions. Tenths of points (.1) acceptable, no speaker point ties.

left 2:30

5 4 3 2 1

AFFIRMATIVE			
Pos		Points	Ranks
2A	Denver 2A	27.5	3
1A	Denver 1A	26.5	4

left 4:00

NEGATIVE			
Pos		Points	Ranks
1N	Shakiya	29	2
2N	Terrance	29.5	1

The Negative **side won the debate, school** Shakiya & Terrance Low point win? No

Judge signature Paul Madden School Baston Debate League

COMMENTS AND REASON FOR DECISION

The Negative proved that the affirmative's epistemology and ontology was uniquely damaging in its discourse and in its solvency of their advantages. The affirmative provided no impact calculus and no alternative meta-philisophical paradigms to weigh their impacts with; Nor did the challenge the negatives. Although the affirmative's advantage areas of "rape" and "econ" were persuasive they failed to prove why they matter. The negative clearly showed how the aff linked to the neg's K, which combined with their discussion on the role of the ballot convinced me of a negative win.

Figure 23. Round One ballot from 2013 UDL National Championship at Georgetown University.

At the same time, Fernando Kirkman, who debated for three years at a high school in Baltimore, and three years at Towson University and one year at Michigan State, pushed the debaters to get better, telling them to strengthen their delivery and argument precision and make sure that their claims are always sufficiently warranted. Over the upcoming summer, Terrance and Shakiya would work on just that.

While there is always room for improvement, Terrance, Shakiya, John, and Mickey represented during the 2012-2013 debate season. Drawing on their training in debate and using their own original critically researched compositions at national tournaments, they all demonstrated a commitment to their intellectual growth and public scholarship, as well as that of their peers with whom they collaborated to prepare for weekend tournaments. Shakiya and Terrance also worked with novice debaters at Crow Hill High School who asked them to provide extra mentoring. Even though John and Mickey weren't at the UDL National Championship, they still kept tabs on the round pairings, including who Shakiya and Terrance were debating and who was judging their rounds, and the round results as the tournament progressed, offering Terrance and Shakiya assistance whenever it was needed. Throughout the year, all four debaters consistently helped and supported each other at national tournaments, which included sharing evidence and intel on teams and judges, and stepping into each other's debate rounds if one team got done first, squading up to have each other's back during judges' critiques (strength in numbers). Additionally, not only were the debaters competing at national tournaments, they were also volunteering to judge novice debate rounds at UDL tournaments in their city.

While Shakiya and Terrance debated at the UDL National Championship, at the end of the year, after advancing to the final elimination rounds at multiple national tournaments, Mickey and John became the first of the ILDI debaters to earn several TOC bids, which gained them entry into the most prestigious and elite national high school debate tournament in the country, the Tournament of Champions (TOC).

At the end of their junior year of high school, the scholars were all looking toward the future; they were about to be high school seniors who would be applying to colleges and universities. If the scholars did well debating in their senior year of high school, they knew they would be better positioned for earning scholarships and getting accepted to the colleges and universities to which they planned to apply. This meant working even harder at debate over the summer.

Given his showing during the 2012-2013 debate season, Terrance received a full-ride scholarship to the Eddie Conway Liberation Institute, a summer debate institute in Maryland. Mickey and John received scholarships to a four-week residential summer debate institute at Dartmouth College; and, upon returning they shared some of what they learned by teaching novice debaters at a UDL summer camp for the city. Shakiya became a Fellow and coordinator for the second ILDI summer institute and assumed a great deal of administrative and teaching responsibilities. No longer just students, Terrance, Shakiya, John, and Mickey were assuming new roles; while they were advancing to the upper echelons of debate, they were also becoming teachers and leaders.

Yet even before the 2013 summer began, Terrance was honored for his debating with a trip to the White House where he met with President Barack Obama, the 44th President of the United States of America.

Qualified General Conclusions

In an interest of drawing a parallel between the potential dangers of a linguistically and culturally restricted English curriculum and monocultural and monolingual debate education, I begin some qualified general conclusions about my findings in chapter five by returning attention to some of the points of tension at the 2013 UDL National Championship. I then conclude with what educators might be able to take away from the findings emerging across the data that points to how Mickey, John, Shakiya and Terrance are using their languages and literacies during the 2012-2013 school year.

Going beyond what happened in the round that Shakiya and Terrance had with Denver at the 2013 UDL National Tournament, in the context of race-based affirmatives like *Black Gold* and *No Culture Left Behind*, that are aligned with the national transportation topic, when a team argues that a race-based debate argument should lose on-face because those arguments are too "unpredictable" and not "good" for education, I read these moves to limit the scope of curricular content and language and literacy use, as being possibly attributable to the fact that non-Black people, especially those who are White or White-presenting, are more likely to have the privilege of not having to think about race on a daily basis because as Ronald Takaki once said in one of his classes I was taking—"Whiteness is in the air we breathe." While it is understandable how textile factories in the Northeast might conjure up painful memories for the descendants of the Irish Americans who worked under inhumane conditions, and while there are countless examples of unforgivable atrocities committed against White people from many different ethnic backgrounds, there is absolutely no equivalent to the transatlantic slave trade for White people. To be sure, I am not arguing that we be comparing equivalencies, as we risk loosing site of the unique sociocultural and historical conditions behind each distinct and horrifying act of genocide and mass murder over time. Each instance of horrific violence deserves sufficient attention to the context, the ideological, epistemological, ontological, discursive, rhetorical and technological maneuvers, that make those individual acts possible as well as ones that are *sustained and gratuitous,* as is the case of anti-Blackness where anti-Black violence is not an anomalous occurrence, and there is no foreseeable end point to the gratuitous violence and general dishonor that Black bodies are subjected to in civil society (Wilderson, 2012). Without these understandings, without the ability to understand how language can be used to justify, create or resist and transform these conditions, we can find ourselves moving down one of those very same paths again (Adorno, 1967/1998), or we can become too blind to see the path on which we are already walking.

In reflecting on the typical arguments that opponents would make when debating either John and Mickey or Shakiya and Terrance during their junior year, that reflected a lack of understanding of anti-Blackness, juxtaposed with the four ILDI debaters developing and demonstrating fairly sophisticated metacognitive awareness of anti-Blackness, I feel comfortable drawing some tentative conclusions. When someone without at least a developing metacognitive understanding of anti-Blackness, first learns about the 2012-2013 national high school debate topic—*Resolved: That the United St*ates *federal government should substantially increase its transportation infrastructure in the United States*—I feel fairly safe in assuming that it is unlikely that one of the first connections a person will make will be between the topic and the Middle Passage (unless perhaps Jay Z's *Holy Grail* just dropped and they had heard *Oceans*), or how the subway train "stays packed like a multicultural slave ship," as Mickey and John wrote in *No Culture Left Behind.*[47] Instead, if one agrees with Takaki that "Whiteness is in the air we breathe," or looks at what is *not taught* in schools—or is merely given lip service (as is being illustrated across *No Culture Left Behind* and *Black Gold*, including in the introduction to Esperanza Spaulding's music video when the children tell their father that they only had one day to "learn" about Africa in school)—I imagine it is much more likely that upon hearing the 2012-2013 national high school policy debate topic, a person will first start thinking about instrumental policies and debates. These might be around highway construction, high speed rail, icebreakers (as described in chapter one), renewable-energy fueled mass transit, bicycle lanes, and perhaps even investment in Merchant Marine infrastructure, or infrastructure improvements on indigenous reservations or in United States' territories like Guam—all of which were actual affirmative cases run by high school teams around the country for the national debate topic during the 2012-2013 academic school year. (Although at the same time, to be fair, when the 2012-2013 transportation topic was announced in the spring semester of 2012, I think I would have also been surprised if a substantial number of people had a knee-jerk reaction to think, “Oh! Merchant Marine infrastructure!”)

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[47] Which grew and developed over the course of the 2012-2013 school year and became: *Pa'Lante*.

To bring it back to the significance of why I am laboring over my disagreement with traditional claims around predictability—the “bright line” for determining what is “predictable,” as well as the bright line for selecting the criteria to use for establishing the bright line for determining what is predictable—is because these claims are not ideologically-neutral or objective; what is presumed and purported to be “predictable” could in fact be rather unpredictable depending on one’s vantage point (read: social location). Whereas on the flip side, it seems *much more predictable* that Terrance and Shakiya would have a Black-centered, multimodal, and poetically-rich debate argument, given what debaters and coaches knew about them in terms of their research interests and sociocultural locations. Remember that word gets around in debate about teams’ research interests and predispositions toward certain types of arguments and styles of debating because teams not only love talking about what happened in debate rounds across any given tournament, but also teams are required to post their cases on the online debate wiki (http://hspolicy.debatecoaches.org/) before the tournament if that case has been run before, or by the start of the round following the one in which the new case was introduced. In other words, where one draws the line around what is “predictable,” or more specifically, what should and should not be researched, read, discussed, composed, and debated, whether inside debate, or in English classes, is highly contested, subjective, ideologically-oriented, and strongly contingent upon one’s sociocultural location.

By extension, in terms of formal schooling, Mickey's Facebook posts evidence how he is unclear as to the criteria determining his summer reading list; and Terrance is appalled by the curricular limitations he experienced in high school. Their reactions point to how what is considered "predictable" or "grade-level appropriate" for what should be taught and learned in school, is contested, subjective, and strongly informed by the positionalities, ideologies, and levels of awareness around linguistic and cultural diversity, of those who set the curricular parameters, or "standards." This means that it is relevant and important for educators to interrogate their sociocultural locations and epistemologies, as well as those that their students bring into the classroom, in designing curriculum and in establishing the boundaries around what counts as knowledge, literacy, or appropriate summer reading material for each grade level. Minimally, it seems essential to ascertain the extent of curriculum designers' (including those at the policy level) critical awareness around, or even willingness to learn or ensure room for students (and teachers) to exercise freedom in deciding what to critically research, engage, compose and produce. This would include freedom in selecting the issues and the wide-range of textual modes and formats for use in the process of researching, consuming, and analyzing texts, and in subsequently experimenting with the many ways to critically synthesize information, theories and research, and subsequently compose new texts by pulling from all of the languages and literacies at one's disposal to create new knowledge that can be shared with others. For Mickey, John, Shakiya, and Terrance, having some of this freedom meant that they were moved to read widely and critically across myriad texts with a growing level of sophistication and comprehension and in turn create dynamic compositions around critical research.

To prevent students like Shakiya and Terrance from composing a case like *Black Gold* or John and Mickey from composing *No Culture Left Behind*, would mean to stand in the way of an opportunity for them to practice using and extending language and multiple literacies. Shakiya, Terrance, Mickey and John are developing and wielding their language and literacies in an attempt to paint more complex pictures of their histories and communities and future possibilities. While the young scholars' communities may acutely experience the direct and collateral damage of anti-Blackness, (neo)colonialism, and interlocking systems of oppression, with residents relatedly facing protracted poverty, gentrification, underfunded schools, drugs, dangerous walks home, racial profiling, and police brutality, the young scholars' roots and communities also give birth to genius: public orators and multilingual griots, creative cultural producers and multimodal composers, historians, preachers, curators, and teachers, and, young scholars and leaders who are fiercely driven to strengthen their oral language abilities and literacies in the interest of social transformation.

As *No Culture Left Behind* and *Black Gold* suggest, given the wealth of digital texts that may not have a print accompaniment, coupled with the growing linguistic and cultural diversity in 21st century teaching and learning environments, limiting the types of texts, languages and literacies upon which our students can draw and create, limits the resources available for our young scholars to develop more nuanced understandings of topics from multiple viewpoints, and limits the opportunities for the young scholars to practice using language and literacies in various and critical ways, from discussions and classroom activities to creating and publically sharing original compositions. By supporting our students in developing a deeper understanding of—with opportunities to experiment with through practice—more diverse ways to leverage and extend all of their language and literacy practices already at their disposal, they might be better positioned to become not only more conversant in their preexisting languages and literacies, but those belonging to other discourse communities that are students are trying to master, as well.

Through both *No Culture Left Behind* and *Black Gold*, the debaters' use of Hip-Hop and Jazz as part of their compositions, indicates how cultures around music can be invaluable academic resources. Just because Immortal Technique or Jay's texts won't come up in search results on EBSCO or JSTOR, doesn't mean that their texts aren't intellectual or uniquely valuable for developing deeper and more texturized understandings of topics like transportation infrastructure investment, and, in the next chapter, United States economic engagement with Latin America. And, these texts might also provide a new window into how our students are seeing, navigating and making meaning in the world through language and literacies.

Our young people can leverage multiple types of texts and literacies (print, digital, visual, oral, multimodal), cultures, discourses, and languages, as resources for critical research and creating complex, evidence-based[48] compositions—that can take on wide-variety of forms, modalities, languages, and uses within and across different discourse communities—around sociocultural, historical, political, economic, and philosophical topics, issues, and debates that matter to our young scholars—or can *become* topics, issues, and debates that matter as students are freed to make connections between those topics, issues, theories, and debates, and their own sociocultural worlds, interests, languages, and every day literacy practices in the 21st century.

Furthermore, in this case study, as our young scholars refined their debating and honed their languages and literacies, they not only became more successful at debating, as was evidenced by tournament records, but they also became more committed to sharing what they had learned with others, not just for a win, but for teaching and mentoring others. Our young scholars' roles were changing in the community of practice from being students and competitors to also being mentors, judges, and teachers.

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[48] As a reminder, when I say "evidence-based" I am not just referring to traditional academic authors of peer-reviewed texts, but also organic intellectuals and personal narratives.

Chapter Six: Breaking Out and Becoming Masters

Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its transportation infrastructure investment in the United States.

- 2013-2014 National High School Policy Debate Topic

Introduction

At the beginning of September 2013, Shakiya, Terrance, John, and Mickey entered their senior year. They had one last year to debate in high school and all four wanted to go out with a bang—they did. The 2013-2014 national high school policy debate topic was: *Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its economic engagement toward Cuba, Mexico, or Venezuela.* For that topic, Shakiya and Terrance clocked in over 126 hours of competitive debating at weekend tournaments around the country. Each debater participated in over 1000 minutes of speaking, 1000 minutes of listening and note taking, and 504 minutes of questioning and answering. They went to Georgetown University, Harvard University, the University of Kentucky, among many others, and, they became one of the top teams in the country, ranked 22 out of thousands. John and Mickey were no different. From the beginning of the summer of 2012 to the end of their senior year in high school in 2014, the four debaters went from being some of the top debaters in their city's Urban Debate League, to being known as the top debaters in the United States. Colleges and universities, from Harvard to Wake Forest University, were lining up to speak with the young scholars and leaders in hopes of successfully recruiting them to matriculate and join their collegiate debate teams. All of the students received excellent college scholarships. Terrance was offered two full-ride scholarships, one of which was to Dartmouth College, which is where he landed—Ivy League status. John and Mickey both matriculated into research universities and Shakiya went on to study at a four-year liberal arts college. After they graduated, John, Mickey and Terrance were all hired to work as instructors at summer debate institutes around the country, including Dartmouth's summer debate institute. While I didn't have funding for the ILDI summer program, Terrance nonetheless insisted we have at least one week for high school debaters who were unable to attend any other summer debate institute. He didn't want to leave without giving back, without being able to pass on what he had learned to the next generation of Black and Brown critical debaters in his city. The scholars were getting it in—and they worked for it.

This chapter follows the four scholars during the 2013-2014 school year and as they reflect upon their experiences in debate as undergraduates in college, to examine the role of the debate apprenticeship in the development of students' academic literacies, civic engagement, and identities. Like I did for chapter five, I use sociocultural theory that sees learning as changing participation over time in communities of practice (Lave, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), to examine literacy events (Barton & Hamilton, 2000) in which the four focal students participated. I draw from observations, video footage, and student artifacts from debate trainings, and weekend debate tournaments, as well as online and personal correspondence with students. In examining these literacy events, I look for evidence of students' developing and evolving use of academic literacies (reading, writing, speaking, listening, digital technology use, viewing, researching, and debating texts and theories), civic engagement, and their changing participation in the community of practice. The data I highlight in this chapter are representative of the overall set for the 2013-2014 school year. The data are also illustrative of how learning is a process of becoming. I take a cue from Lave (1996) and start with a tournament in the fall of 2013 to "establish the location in which and the processes by which the most potent identity-constituting learning conjunctures occur" and the "foci of identity-changing activity" (p. 162). I conclude by making some qualified general statements about the role of debate, oral language and new literacies in the evolving development of academic literacies, civic engagement, and identities among the focal students.

Shaikya and Terrance: The Breakthrough Album

Shakiya, Terrence, and I awoke early on Sunday, December 9, 2013 to prepare for the 8am Quarterfinal round. At this point Shakiya and Terrence have been debating in Scranton, Pennsylvania since Wednesday, December 4th. Over the course of the previous four days, they debated in *fourteen* 90-minute debate rounds—that's 21 hours of debating in addition to the time in between debate rounds and late nights spent preparing for the debates through research, reading, writing, listening, viewing, and discussing. As opposed to the other 42 teams competing in the varsity division at the national high school debate invitational tournament who arrived on Friday, Shakiya and Terrance had been debating since Wednesday because they were among the nine teams from around the country invited to compete in the Round Robin Debate Tournament, which preceded the national invitational tournament. Shakiya and Terrence competed in seven rounds at the Round Robin, winning five, and Shakiya was the 14th speaker out of 100 debaters and Terrence was the 3rd—a major change from the previous year when they lost every single one of their rounds at the Round Robin. After winning five preliminary rounds at the national invitational tournament proper, Shakiya and Terrance had a high enough winning record at the tournament to get a bye[49] in the double octo-final round, leading them to compete in their octo-final round, which they won, bringing their total number of rounds won over the course of five days to 12.

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[49] Getting a "bye" means that the team does not have to debate in that round. That bye constitutes a win for the team receiving a bye. To determine the speaker points for that round, for each individual speaker, the number total from averaging their average speaker points from all of their other rounds will be used as the speaker points recorded for that speaker's bye round.

The quarterfinal debate round is against two debaters who also participated in ILDI. The banquet room at the Radisson has over a dozen high school debaters watching the round, most of whom are White. The high school spectators did not advance to elimination rounds (elims) and instead of chillin out before departing Scranton, they have chosen to watch the ILDI debaters. Most of the spectators are sitting on the carpeted floor on either side of the walls perpendicular to the four quarterfinalists who are seated at two long banquet tables in the back of the room facing the judges' table positioned in the middle of the room. The spectators have out pens and paper or laptop computers for flowing (taking detailed shorthand notes) all of the arguments in the debate round. (Debaters flow elims to improve flowing skills as well as to be able to to speculate as to who will win, and comment on the judges' decision. This practice of strategic note taking is essential in order to follow and comprehend the sheer number of arguments that the competitors will present, develop, question, refute, defend, and leverage to win, in order.)

All of the spectators are intently focused on the quarterfinalists. They know that both teams are not the typical run-of-the-mill policy debaters. The affirmative team had been running a debate case grounded in postcolonial theory and literature about anti-Blackness. At Georgetown that year, they began their case about the importance of investigating the specters of injustices wrought by colonialism that haunt the living in former European colonies yet are muffled into silence by historical amnesia in European consciousness:

Infinity is a strange concept

Even more strange is an infinite blackness

Moving through time as the unheard shrieks and hollering of hollow husks buried 2ft under

This is what lies in the underbelly of our engagement

Do not fear the infinite specter; dwell in its torn heart and through its eyes see a better future………..

After reading evidence from postcolonial studies as well as an excerpt from an essay by Saidiya Hartman in which she explains her use of critical fabulation as a method to guide her writing a counter-history/narrative of the Black slave(s) Venus,[50] that was oriented toward making visible the disposability and fungibility of Black lives in the Middle Passage and in the annals of history, through, borrowing from Stan Douglass, what Hartman calls a "recombinant narrative" which "'loops the strands' of incommensurate accounts and which weaves present, past, and future in retelling the girl's story and in narrating the time of slavery as our present" (p. 12). Hartman clarifies that this is "not to *give voice* to the slave, but rather to imagine what cannot be verified, a realm of experience which is situated between two zones of death—social and corporeal death—and to reckon with the precarious lives which are visible only in the moment of their disappearance" (p. 12). Hartman (and the ILDI debaters) further explain: "The necessity of trying to represent what we cannot, rather than leading to pessimism or despair must be embraced as the impossibility that conditions our knowledge of the past and animates our desire for a liberated future" (p. 13). After the Hartman evidence, the debaters conclude the first affirmative constructive (1AC) speech with an original poem:

Your signature dances vicariously around the ballot
Giving a frame to the faceless, the shapeless, the nameless black masses
It's a candle that you ignite
Illuminating all the black ghosts
And giving a toast to this eulogy
So we can see

---

[50] In the same way that Hartman explains in her essay, I cannot describe who Venus is/was, because all I know about her, indeed, according to Hartman, all that historical records (records from the 1792 *Trial of Captain John Kimber for the Murder of Two Female Negro Slaves, on Board the Recovery, African Slave Ship)* appear to know about her is that she was a young girl who was a slave who died on the African slave ship, the *Recovery*. I put /s/ in parenthesis after /slave/ to indicate, in the same way that Hartman does—to connote how there are many "Venus's" documented throughout the history of slavery who were equally disposable; historical accounting (or lack thereof) renders Venus fungible.

All the cracks in modernity
The impossibility that makes a possibility
For me to be free

Shakiya and Terrance, on the other hand, had been running *Love (VIA IMMORTAL TECHNIQUE)*, a debate case the two young scholars composed by drawing from across the works of bell hooks and Immortal Technique to center self-love—especially Black self-love—as an ontological imperative and a necessary precondition for undertaking any revolutionary action to transform oppressive conditions, relations, systems, and institutions, including oppression that the young scholars point to as having grown out of (neo)colonialism including United States economic engagement with Latin America. The young scholars' advocacy stated: "So the advocacy is really this simple, Shakiya and I advocate self-love as a foundation for all actions and discussions, it starts with us wassup" (see Figure 24).

Figure 24. Terrance & Shakiya's Advocacy for their Affirmative: *Love (VIA IMMORTAL TECHNIQUE)*

So the advocacy is really this simple, Shamella and I advocate self love as a foundation for all actions and discussions, it starts with us wassup

hooks, 2001. (bell, doctor of philosophy of literature, former Yale professor, prolific author, public intellectual, social activist, *Salvation: Black people and love*. New York, NY: Perennial Publishers pp. _______).

To heal our wounded communities, which are diverse and multilayered, we must return to a love ethic, one that is exemplified by the combined forces of care, respect, knowledge, and responsibility. Throughout our history in this nation black leaders have spoken about the importance of love. Indeed, now and then contemporary leaders stress the importance of a love ethic. Referring to the love ethic in his work Race Matters, philosopher Cornel West contends: "A love ethic has nothing to do with sentimental feelings or tribal connections. . . . Self-love and love of others are both modes toward increasing self-valuation and encouraging political resistance in one's community." While contemporary black leaders and thinkers talk about the need to have a love ethic as the foundation of struggles for black self-determination, in actuality most nonfiction writing about black experience does not address the issue of love in an extensive manner.

Figure 24. Terrance and Shakiya's advocacy for their 2013-2013 affirmative debate case Love (VIA IMMORTAL TECHNIQUE)

What does this have to do with the 2013-2014 national high school policy debate topic? The two debaters argue that the absence of love as a foundational ethic for United States economic engagement with Latin America is what allows for U.S. federal policies that exploit and harm rather than actually help societies, communities, and economies in Latin America. Terrance and Shakiya say in their 1AC: "Like forreal, nothing about the state will change unless we nip this question of love, because hooks said it: without a sound emotional foundation material privilege corrupts into the endless consumption of things like what? Oh yeah Latin America."

To illustrate this effect, *Love* begins with an audio clip from Technique's song, *The 3rd World*, in which he raps:

> I'm from where the gold and diamonds are ripped from the earth
> right next to the slave castles where the water is cursed
> from where police brutality's not half as nice
> It makes the hood in America look like paradise
> compared to the AIDS-infested Caribbean slum
> African streets where the passport's an a American gun
> from where they massacre people and try to keep it quiet
> and spend the next 25 years tryin' to deny it
> I'm from where they cut your hands off if you make a fist
> and niggas grow coca cause the job market doesn't exist
> except slave labor modern day company store
> and peace keeper's don't ever ever ever come here no more
> from where the bombs that they used to drop on Vietnam
> Kill us children born deformed eight months before they born
> I'm from where they lost the true meaning of the Qur'an
> 'cause heroin is not compatible with Islam
> And niggas know that, but grow that poppy seed anyway
> 'cause that food drop parachute does not come everyday
> I'm from where people pray to the gods of their conquerors
> and practically every president's a money launderer
> From the only place democracy is acceptable
> Is if America candidate is electable
> And they might even have a black president, but he's useless
> 'Cause he does not control the economy stupid!
>
> [Chorus]
> Lock and load your gun, where I'm from: the Third World son
> Been to many places but I'm Third World-born
> Guerrillas hit and run where I'm from: the Third World son
> You polluted everything, and now the Third World's gone
> The waters poisoned where I'm from son: the Third World son
> Seven hundred children die by the end 'this song

> Revolution'll come, where I'm from: the Third World son
> Constant occupation, leaves the Third World torn

Terrance and Shakiya follow this clip by explaining its significance to the Latin America topic and Terrance and Shakiya's *Love* argument (the text below is how it appears on the written version of *Love (VIA IMMORTAL TECHNIQUE))* that identifies a lack of love—"lack of care, trust, respect, commitment—as an answer to what Gramsci deeply wrested with: how is it that in a world with so much oppression, can there be an absence of revolution?:

> Immortal Technique got to the root of the topic this year in third world when he clearly explained the u.s imposition of oppressive attitudes that lock people of color in the brokenness that is the status quo of latin America that is replicated in u.s America with lack of self analysis and self reflection that is evident in the status quo. People can't love? so let's start off the discussion right, there is a lovelessness amongst us, all the world sees now is hatred, yes hatred, the hatred that has fractured the world time and time again, the reason for lack of care, trust, respect, commitment, the same hatred that impacts the disenfranchised, neglected, and invisible people of color in this world, to accept the world as it is now is to devastate our future generations, to maintain the same disproportionate relationship that Technique addresses, there is a collective obligation to confront it here because this, this is the failure of the nation.

This explanation is followed by supporting evidence from bell hooks' book *Salvation: Black People and Love* in which she reflects upon feeling "continually distressed" and "shaken to [her] core" when she would lecture at public schools and "hear Black children of all ages express their deep conviction that love does not exist" (p. xviii). In defining love as "a combination of care, knowledge, responsibility, respect, trust, and commitment" she admits that:

> Calling out the extent to which our nation has become cynical about love, it should have come as no surprise that the pervasive lovelessness I talk about is not only most deeply felt in the hearts of children but that it would be among those groups of children, black girls and boys, who are collectively disenfranchised, neglected, or rendered invisible in this society, and that I would hear these sentiments frankly acknowledged (p. xviii).

Hooks confesses that "Standing before black children who tell me there is no love in clear, flat, dispassionate voices, I confront our collective failure as a nation, and as African-Americans, to create a world where we can all know love" (p. xviii).

Terrance and Shakiya follow this passage from *Salvation* with the written text in Figure 25 that serves as their *tag* (as it is called in debate), or introduction to the debaters' Thornburn evidence (also in Figure 25). The young scholars capitalized certain words and phrases in their *tag* because in the debate round, this signals to Terrance (who delivers the 1AC speech) that these words require extra emphasis (and they also serve as quick reminders of the arguments to extend throughout the debate round).

Figure 25. Tagged evidence in Terrance and Shakiya's Affirmative Case *Love (VIA IMMORTAL TECHNIQUE)*

REALITY REWRITTEN

This hatred is still in the topic where the resolution says things like "towards" instead of "with" and Latin American countries have been turned into PLANTATIONS, the fertile soil has been turned into PROFITS for US capitalists as opposed to food for the masses, PILLAGING, EXPROPRIATION by force of arms and the deprivation of MILLIONS of people of their livelihood. WELCOME TO LATIN AMERICA.

The mineral wealth of the soil, the PATRIMONY of the peoples, DRAINED and CARTED out, BILLIONS in wealth grabbed as Multinational corporations EXPLOIT the working class.

WELCOME INDEED TO LATIN AMERICA

US imperialism has INTENSIFIED its economic penetration and SUPEREXPLOITATION of Latin America DICTATING the budget of Latin American Countries DEMANDING the wealth and labor through various US dictated treaties all painted as the road to ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, FREEDOM and DEVELOPMENT. This is mere economic DOUBLESPEAK, only RACIST filth of US imperialism could justify ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT that does not aid the masses. Only the love can truly lead to economic development the STRUGGLE that strikes at the very FOUNDATION of US epistemology.

THORBURN representative of the WORKERS PARTY, USA 2k4

Michael-; "US Imperialism, Hands Off Latin America;" a Chicago-area meeting organized by the Peace Agenda Forum on October 21, 2004; published online-November 9; http://www.anti-imperialist.org/Hands-Off-Latin-America_11-9-04.htm

Economic Basis

Of course, behind all this military intervention are the economic interests of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class.

Everyone knows that in Latin America whole countries have been turned into plantations - banana plantations, coffee plantations, sugar plantations, rubber plantations, etc. - owned by U.S. agri-businesses.

The fertile soil of Latin America has not been used to feed its people but turned into profits for the U.S. capitalists. Thus for example El Salvador has lost its self-sufficiency in food as its land has been used to grow and export coffee for the U.S. capitalists. And along with pillaging the land, U.S. imperialism - in alliance with the local oligarchy and fascist regimes - expropriated, by force of arms, the land of the peasants, abolished their communal and other indigenous ownership systems, and deprived millions of people of their livelihood. This same story, repeated in different forms all across the continent, is one of the root causes of today's war in the Colombian countryside, where for 100 years peasants have been fighting to keep their land and livelihood from armed expropriation by landlords in alliance with U.S. imperialism.

So too the mineral wealth of the soil, the patrimony of the peoples, has literally been drained and carted out of Latin America. Just as the conquistadors looted the gold of the indigenous peoples, the U. S. capitalists have grabbed billions of dollars in wealth by taking the copper of Chile, the tin of Bolivia, the oil of Venezuela and Mexico, the bauxite of Haiti, etc., etc.

While grabbing the raw materials and mineral wealth, the U.S. multinational corporations have set up branch plants across Latin America in order to exploit the working class. Under the thumb of U. S.-imposed governments, Latin American workers are super-exploited and often prevented from exercising such elementary rights as the right to unionize. Today, for example, after U.S. imperialism drained Haiti of its huge bauxite reserves, robbing the national patrimony of the people, 150 U.S. companies have set up shop in the country, paying workers as little as $1.60/day.

During the last several years, under the signboard of "neo-liberal economics," U.S. imperialism has been intensifying its economic penetration and superexploitation of Latin America. Through military, economic and political pressure, through bilateral and multilateral such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Central American Free Trade Agreement, the Free Trade Area of the Americas, etc., through the IMF and other international financial institutions, imperialism is directly dictating the budget of Latin American countries, forcing the privatization of state-owned industries, grabbing control of virtually the entire economic infrastructure. The goal if the virtual annexation of the continent by U.S. capital.

By 2001, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean owned $787 billion to U.S. and international bankers and were paying more than $150 billion/year in debt service (see U.S Commerce Department's "Survey of Current Business," September 2002).

This huge debt in turn is used by imperialism as a lever to further open up the economies of Latin America to imperialist penetration and take-over.

For example, from 1982 to early the 1990's Mexico was forced to privatize 886 state enterprises out of a total of 1,155 with U.S. monopolies gaining control over telecommunications, airlines, banking, mining, steel and other sectors. Similarly in Chile, the Pinochet regime (installed through a CIA coup) privatized 160 state corporations, 16 banks and thousands of mines and agricultural enterprises from 1975 through 1989.

Today, U.S. imperialism is demanding that literally all the wealth and labor of Latin America be put at its disposal. Various U. S.-dictated treaties are turning even the water resources over to U.S. multinational corporations and forbidding Latin American governments from protecting even such sectors as health care, education, or the national forests from foreign ownership. U.S. imperialism aims at nothing less than the virtual annexation of the continent.

As U.S. imperialism spreads its net across Latin America, the apologists for capitalism, portray this process as the road to "economic opportunity, freedom and development."

But, this is just economic doublespeak. The only "freedom" aimed at is the "freedom" of the U.S. monopolies to rob the wealth and exploit the peoples.

Why is it that Latin America remains economically underdeveloped and so many of the people live in poverty and hardship? The continent has fabulously rich soil and vast mineral wealth. And only the racist filth of imperialism could claim that the people don't work and create new values.

The real problem is precisely that the values created by the labor of the people leaves their countries and goes to Wall Street and Washington, D.C. to fill the pockets of the U.S. capitalists. The labor of the people does not go to insure their well-being or the economic independence and development of the Latin American countries, it is, instead, poured into the foundations of U.S. imperialism's empire. So just as the path to genuine democracy in Latin America can only be the path of struggle against U.S. intervention, so too, the path of economic development and social progress can only be the path of struggle against the exploiting, colonial relations imposed on Latin America by U.S. capitalist-imperialism. This is the path of cancelling the debt, the path of putting the handcuffs on the multinational corporations, the path of nationalizing the economic infrastructure and putting the economic resources of Latin America in the hands of the peoples themselves.

Looking into the economic basis of U.S. intervention again teaches the people in the U.S. that our struggle against U.S. militarism and colonialism in Latin America must strike against the very foundations of the capitalist-imperialist system. In political terms it means that the struggle against U.S. intervention must be directed against the parties of monopoly capital and imperialism - against the Republicans and Democrats. (to be continued).

Figure 25. Thorburn evidence as it appeared in the text of Love (VIA IMMORTAL TECHNIQUE), Terrance and Shakiya's debate case from their senior year.

Terrance and Shakiya argue that the debate community must talk about love in the context of the 2013-2014 national high school policy debate topic on Latin America or else

> you really gunna destroy self determination and continue terroristic violence and predatory opportunism that the state continuously engages in, this massive change is not material but a change in the psyches that gives life meaning, purpose and direction (see Figure 26).

Figure 26. Tagged evidence from the written text of *Love (VIA IMMORTAL TECHNIQUE)*

Just like the debate communities normative discussions we continue to skirt the conversation of love in relationship to Latin America, stop throwing the discussion of love to the side or you really gunna destroy self determination and continue terroristic violence and predatory opportunism that the state continuously engages in, this massive change is not material but a change in psyches that gives life meaning, purpose and direction

hooks, 2001. (bell, doctor of philosophy of literature, former Yale professor, prolific author, public intellectual, social activist, *Salvation: Black people and love*. New York, NY: Perennial Publishers pp. _______).

Indeed, love was mocked–not just the love-your-enemies message of nonviolent revolution spearheaded by Martin Luther King, but also the message of building self-love, healthy-self esteem, and loving communities. As the quest for power subsumed the quest for liberation in anti-racist struggle, there was little or no discussion of the purpose and meaning of love in black experience, of love in liberation struggle. The abandonment of a discourse on love, of strategies to create a foundation of self-esteem and self-worth that would undergird struggles for self-determination, laid the groundwork for the undermining of all our efforts to create a society where blackness could be loved, by black folks, by everyone

The denigration of love in black experience, across classes, has become the breeding ground for nihilism, for despair, for ongoing terroristic violence and predatory opportunism. It has taken from many black people the positive agency needed if we are to collectively self-actualize and be self-determining. Many of the material gains generated by militant anti-racist struggle have had little positive impact on the psyches and souls of black folks, for the revolution from within that is the foundation on which we build self-love and love of others has not yet taken place. Black folks and our allies in struggle who care about the fate of Black America recognize that the transformative power of love in daily life is the only force that can solve the myriad crises we now face.

We cannot effectively resist domination if our efforts to create meaningful, lasting personal and social change are not grounded in a love ethic. Prophetically, Salvation: Black People and Love calls us to return to love. Addressing the meaning of love in black experience today, calling for a return to an ethic of love as the platform on which to renew progressive anti-racist struggle, and offering a blueprint for black survival and self-determination, this work courageously takes us to the heart of the matter. To give ourselves love, to love blackness, is to restore the true meaning of freedom, hope and possibility in all of our lives.

When black children tell me, "There is no love," I tell them love is always there–that nothing can keep us from love if we dare to seek it and to treasure what we find. Even when we cannot change ongoing exploitation and domination, love gives life meaning, purpose, and direction. Doing the work of love, we ensure our survival and our triumph over the forces of evil and destruction. Hansberry was right to insist that "we know about love." But many of us have forgotten what we know, what love is or why we need love to sustain life. This book reminds us. Love is our hope and our salvation.

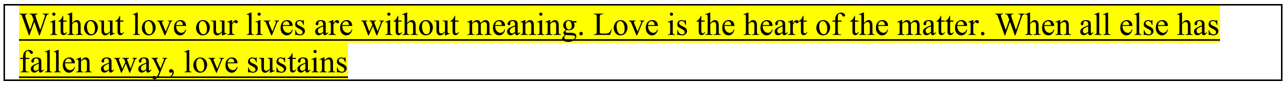
Figure 26. Tagged evidence from the written text of Love (VIA IMMORTAL TECHNIQUE).

Love concludes with the debaters explaining the significance of winning the judge's ballot (meaning winning the debate round) because "The ballot represents a political embracement of a return to the love aesthetic, you judge, are helping to create the foundation for larger social change." This claim is followed by another bell hooks quote (see Figure 27).

Figure 27. Bell Hooks Evidence as it Appeared in *Love (VIA IMMORTAL TECHNIQUE)*

hooks, 2001. (bell, doctor of philosophy of literature, former Yale professor, prolific author, public intellectual, social activist, *Salvation: Black people and love*. New York, NY: Perennial Publishers pp. _______).

Love is profoundly political. Our deepest revolution will come when we understand this truth. Only love can give us the strength to go forward in the midst of heartbreak and misery. Only love can give us the power to reconcile, to redeem, the power to renew weary spirits and save lost souls. The transformative power of love is the foundation of all meaningful social change.



Without love our lives are without meaning. Love is the heart of the matter. When all else has fallen away, love sustains

Figure 27. Bell hooks evidence as it appeared in Terrance and Shakiya's 2013-2014 debate case: Love (VIA IMMORTAL TECHNIQUE).

These two original debate cases and the teams that composed them (the two UDL teams in the quarterfinal round) were widely discussed among the 50 varsity teams competing at the Electric City National High School Debate Invitational Tournament. The two teams were fairly well known in general after word got out that they had already closed out one national tournament in October. At that October tournament, after both teams won their semifinal debate rounds, instead of debating the final round to determine who was the victor, both teams decided to declare a co-championship title, and, in lieu of the final round, host a public debate and community discussion at a later date on anti-Blackness in the debate community. At one of the first national high school tournaments of the year, the number of students and coaches who had already lodged complaints about racist acts in the debate community directed at Black and Brown debaters and coaches (many of whom were ILDI high school debaters and faculty members) had become so numerous and the problem blatantly obvious such that even the tournament administrators agreed it was appropriate for the two teams to stand in solidarity as co-champions instead of having to debate out the final round (a move that administrators had never allowed to occur in the past 52 years of the national tournament's existence). The four ILDI debaters, their coaches (myself included), and the tournament administrators (who were also teachers and coaches of well established debate programs at specialized high schools in the region) agreed that it was important to signal to the rest of the community that we had a gravely serious problem that must be addressed.[51]

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[51] Unfortunately, as I write this in 2016, the depth and breadth of anti-Blackness in debate is so deep that things have in many ways gotten worse in terms of the sociopolitical and cultural backlash against Black and Brown debaters.

Given the moves that all four debaters had already made during the year, and how many other teams were talking about them throughout the tournament, I was not surprised to see how many other high school debaters filled the banquet room at 8am on December 9th to watch the quarterfinal debate round between the two teams from the same Urban Debate League.

The affirmative team presents a postcolonial case, similar to the one they ran at Georgetown, about anti-Blackness and the importance of developing an awareness of the past: remembering social, political and cultural movements of the past, especially past revolutions, in an effort to learn from their challenges, successes and failures to design new approaches to create a liberatory future. Sadiya Hartman, Columbia University professor in the department of English and Comparative Literature, is still a central author of the affirmative's case. After the 1AC speech, Terrence stands up for the three-minute cross-examination. In order to set up the first negative constructive (1NC) speech, Terrance directs a series of questions to the first affirmative (1A) speaker:

"Alright then what does that awareness do? I'm confused about what that actually does for the community…if you win this round what does that do for the people here?"

Without hesitation the 1A answers, "All these people in the room, most of them don't remember what has happened in the past and we always forget the past." The first part of the 1A's answer is a qualified and fairly reasonable assertion that is reflected by many scholars beyond those in the 1AC, including Gore Vidal who titled his 2005 book: *Imperial America: Reflections on the United States of Amnesia.* However, the 1A gets himself into trouble when he uses the qualifier "always." Shakiya hears this.

She cocks her head and furrows her brow and calls out the 1A: "That's an assumption."

Terrance pushes the 1A further about the change the affirmative is suggesting should happen: “I’m still confused. What does that do? Alright, what type of positive solution does the 1A create?”

“The 1AC is the first step.”

“Alright so you’re the first step, *what* is that step?” Terrance tries to get the affirmative to provide a concrete answer.

Jumping in to give the 1A some support, the second affirmative speaker (2A) picks up one of the Hartman (2008) cards[52] and says:

> Our Hartman evidence says that ‘The necessity of trying to represent what we cannot, rather than leading to pessimism or despair must be embraced as the impossibility that conditions our knowledge of the past and animates our desire for a liberated future’ (p. 13).[53]

“Alright, animates our—”, Terrance tries to clarify the 2A’s response but the 2A cuts him off, answering for the 1A: “What that future is, we don’t know yet, but rather we say that we need to get out of here because there is nothing left for us—”

“Get out of what?” Terrance asks, trying to capitalize on the 2A’s language use to illustrate what he sees as lack of clarity in the goals of the affirmative.

“Like this specific space,” answers the 2A.

“What space? Like the debate space? America? What space?”

“Just modernity in general.”

Unsatisfied with the ambiguity of the 2A’s response, Terrance strives to get clarity. “Can you explain that? Like what does it mean to get out of modernity?”

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[52] A card is a piece of evidence, a direct quote from a text.

[53] Hartman, S. (June 2008). Venus in two acts. *Small Axe, 12*(2), 1-14.

"Well the 1AC creates cracks in walls so we can break out."

Recognizing that he has already done his best to call attention to the seemingly ambiguous nature of the affirmative case, Terrance slightly shifts his line of questioning to set up another argument. "Okay, so like I guess how is this accessible on the micro level? If people wish to engage in this sort of liberatory aesthetic, like how would that look? How would we engage in that?" Terrance is looking at the judges as he presses the affirmative for answers; his goal is to persuade the judge, not the other team, a practice he was trained to do. "Like poking holes in walls, how do we do that?"

This cross-examination time is crucial for establishing ethos in the round. If the negative team can convincingly position the affirmative's advocacy as too nebulous to mobilize people around any concrete action, then the negative creates space for their counter-advocacy to shine and take center stage. In this case, Terrence and Shakiya are setting up their negative argument, which takes inspiration from Black feminism and Hip-Hop, and stresses the need for immediate and tangible action to address social injustices that Black and Brown young scholars, leaders and activists, especially those who are Black women, face on a daily basis in debate and in navigating their lives outside of debate. Shakiya and Terrance had written roughly 20 percent of their argument before the tournament; the rest was a blend of in-round writing and improvisational delivery (Woodyard, 2003). This is an incredible challenging task, as each constructive speech is eight minutes long and each rebuttal speech is five minutes long. Out of the two constructive speeches (each speaker on a team delivers one constructive speech and one rebuttal) and two rebuttals, Terrance and Shakiya each had to compose roughly 10 and one half minutes of speeches that they delivered at a fairly rapid pace (about 300 words a minute, 3,150 words in total).

At the end of the cross-examination, without taking any preparation time before the 1NC speech, Terrance connects his Beats by Dre Pill Portable Speaker to his laptop and cues up a video clip. The 1NC begins with a three-minute excerpt from *The* (*Re)volution of Immortal Technique—*a documentary about rapper, humanitarian, and activist, Felipe Andres Coronel, aka Immortal Technique—which documents his beginnings as a young child growing up in Peru and then New York City, and into his adulthood as an internationally renowned Hip-Hop artist travelling the world, sharing his music on the stage while also working with the people on humanitarian causes. In the clip, Technique talks about the importance of indigenous epistemologies and cultures as well as taking action in the service of social justice. Speeches from Technique's shows and conversations from interviews are mixed with music, which is followed by an interview with Technique's mom. As Technique's mom is speaking in Spanish to describe her pride in how Technique has leveraged his education and work as a Hip-Hop performing and recording artist to promote social justice around the world, Terrance demonstrates his growing knowledge of Spanish that he had been learning in high school, by translating her words into English for the spectators and judges: "'Our focus was on education. It was more important to us that you be able to do something to make this world more of a just place. And I believe you have succeeded in having an impact wherever you have gone.'"

Following the clip Shakiya's voice booms in (she is the first negative speaker and this is her speech). She sounds dramatically different from a year earlier when she appeared to lack confidence, read slower, and was learning how to pronounce new words and speak with more fluidity and rhythm. Now Shakiya's voice exudes authority and confidence, and her speech possesses a control of diction and has a rhythm that is unmistakably unique. She has a distinct flow. Clearly pronouncing and emphasizing words almost on every quarter note, she systematically punches important words that she wants the emphasize like a seasoned emcee—a new skill that emerged her senior year as she developed a heightened awareness of how to punctuate certain words to more strategically and effectively deliver a speech. One could potentially play a beat with a 4/4-time signature and line up parts of her speech with the musical notation. Shakiya's three years of hard work in debate and 17 years of navigating the world as a young Black woman facing interlocking systems of oppression (Combahee River Collective, 1978; Collins, 1990/2009) entrenched in school, debate, media, and in public and private spaces—that told her she had too much attitude, or that she was too loud, or she had bad hair, or her skin was too dark, or that she was too "ghetto," or that she was worth less than a man, or she was worth less than a White woman, or that signaled she was invisible or uncomfortably hyper-visible—bubbled up and formed into a powerful force. Shakiya had had enough. She was done listening to the voices that expressed hatred and disdain for Black women. Shakiya was ready to roar and own it:

> There is something *completely wrong* with their vague advocacy. We need to find some way to get *shit done* in debate. There shouldn't be intellectual *masturbation*. We need to *acknowledge* what people are doing *now* for liberation. Because it's *not like* its *impossible*. Immortal Technique says we *shouldn't* be this form of oppression. We have the *right* to mobilize. The *right* to *fight back*. We need to be *inspired* by people *around us* and those who have been inspired by *us.* Immortal Technique has been doing it *all along*. We can't just be *vague*. The advocacy doesn't give *any real suggestions* or *examples* for liberation...The gold are the people *now* that are doing the *work* that we *don't acknowledge. Black women* haunt us in debate.

A number of spectators react with mmmhhmm, oooooh, and gasps upon hearing this bold and vivid, yet accurate, observation. Propelled by the energy of spoken soul (Rickford & Rickford, 2000) and Nommo (Asante, 1987), without pausing or slowing down her speech as a result of audience's reaction, Shakiya layers her speech over the spectators' sounds.

> Many people ignore what we have to *say*. I do work *here*, *inside and outside* of debate. We have to have these inspiring role models. When we don't look at it, that's the form of oppression silencing...
>
> Neither in their arguments talks about the *acknowledgment* of the *self* to know *who we are.* We need to be *bold* and actually *understand* and *recognize* shit *first* and then *attack* it *head on*. *They say* that we are *forgetting* our past and not learning *anything* from it and anti-Blackness structures everything, but there've been people who've fought in the past and people who are fighting now. You should be *ashamed* of running this type of argument, especially with the people in the back of the room, the people who are fighting for us because *we are* the *future*! They don't love the community enough because they don't do *shit* for *it*. If they *truly understand how* then they would actually take liberatory approaches.

Echoing Dr. Reid-Brinkley's lesson from ILDI in the summer of 2012, Shakiya reminds her colleagues, "*we* are the future!" As Shakiya had studied the works of Paulo Freire (1970) and Black feminist theory (Collins, 2009; hooks, 1981, 2000; Taylor, 1998), the critical importance of praxis echoes loudly in her speech. Shakiya recognizes that only by combining action with reflection—the word and the work—can one transform the world; action without reflection is mere activism and reflection, or just "remembering the past" without taking action, is mere verbalism—or in the words of Shakiya, "intellectual masturbation"—both of which are incapable of causing transformation (Freire, 1970). Shakiya demands that her peers recognize the present work being done, especially the work being done by Black women debaters, that has already grown out of the thinking, the remembering, the affirmative is calling for. Shakiya takes the affirmative's advocacy as a reflection of them ignoring this work. Consequently, she expresses her outrage over the way that she and other young Black women in debate—including "the people in the back of the room" who were young Black women judging the debate round—are ignored and sidelined, despite the work that they are doing on a daily basis to mentor and coach other young Black and Brown debaters in an effort to support and extend literacies of access and liberation by strengthening young scholars' abilities to use language to speak truth to power because the stakes are high.

To elucidate these stakes, Shakiya proceeds to deliver a pre-written portion of her and Terrance's negative argument beginning with their introduction to an excerpt from Immortal Technique's *The Poverty of Philosophy*, which is followed by direct quotes from Technique's text (see Figure 28). Terrance and Shakiya are arguing that one's material needs must first be met before expecting them to philosophize about freedom and a social and political revolution:

> The affiirmative's ability to philosophically talk about freedom through their discursive element is beyond the rational of which Blacks and Latin@s function especially when we're looking for things like food, clothes and shelter in the hood.

Figure 28. Immortal Technique Evidence Used in the Debate Round

The affiirmative's ability to philosophically talk about freedom through their discursive element is beyond the rational of which Blacks and Latin@s function especially when we're looking for things like food, clothes and shelter in the hood. Immortal Technique in 2011[54]:

'Most of my Latino and black people who are struggling to get food clothes and shelter in the hood are so *concerned* with that that philosophizing about freedom and socialist democracy is unfortunately beyond their rationale. They don't realize that America can't *exist* without separating them from their identity because if they had some sense of *who* they really are that they would, that there's no way in hell we'd allow this country to push its genocidal consensus on our *homelands*. This ignorance exists but it can be *destroyed*.

'Niggas talk about change and working within the system to achieve that. The problem with always being *conformist* is that when we try to *engage* in the system from within it's not that you change the system; it's the system that will eventually change *you*. There is usually nothing wrong with a compromise in a situation, but compromising *yourself* in a situation is another story *completely* and I have seen this happen long enough in the few years that I've been alive to know that it's a serious problem. Latino America is a huge colony of countries whose presidents are cowards in the face of economic imperialism. You see, third world countries are rich places, abundant in resources, and many of these countries have the capacity to feed their starving people and the children we always see digging for food in trash on commercials. But plutocracies, in other words a government run by the rich such as this one and traditionally oppressive European states, force the third world into buying overpriced, unnecessary goods while exporting huge portions of their national resources.

I'm quite sure that people look upon my attitude and sentiments and look for hypocrisy and hatred in my words. My revolution is born out of love for my people, not hatred for others.

'You see, most of Latinos are here because of the great inflation that was caused by American companies in Latin America. Aside from that, Many are seeking a life away from the puppet democracies that were funded by the United States; places like El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru, Colombia, Nicaragua, Ecuador and Republica Dominicana, and not just Spanish-speaking countries either, but Haiti and Jamaica as well.

'As different as we have been taught to look at each other by colonial society, we are in the same struggle and until we realize that, we'll be fighting for scraps from the table of a system that has kept us subservient instead of being self determined. That's why we have no control over when the embargo will stop in Cuba, or when the bombs will stop dropping in Vieques.

But you see, here in America the attitude that is fed to us is that outside of America there live lesser people. 'Fuck them, let them fend for themselves.' No, fuck you, they are you. No matter how much you want to dye your hair blonde and put fake eyes in, or follow an anorexic standard of beauty, or no matter how many diamonds you buy

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[54] From The Poverty of Philosophy.

> from people who exploit your own **brutality** to get them, no matter what kind of car you drive or what kind of fancy clothes you put on, you will never be them. They're always gonna look at you as nothing but a little monkey. I'd rather be *proud* of what I am than desperately try to be something that I'm really not just to fit in. And whether we want to accept it or not, that's what this culture or lack of culture is feeding us.
>
> I want a better life for my family and for my children, but it doesn't have to be at the expense of millions of lives in my homeland. We're given the idea that if we didn't have these people to exploit then America wouldn't be rich enough to let us have these little petty material things in our lives and basic standards of living. No, that's wrong. It's the business giants and the government officials who make all the real money. We have whatever they kick down to us. My *enemy* is not the average white man, it's not the kid down the block or the kids that I see in the street. My enemy is the man I don't see: the people in the White House, the corporate monopolies owners, fake liberal politicians. *Those* are my enemies. The generals of the armies that are mostly conservatives those are the real motherfuckers that I need to bring it to, not the poor, broke country ass soldier that's too stupid to know shit about the way things are set up.

Figure 28. Immortal Technique evidence used in the debate round. Shakiya read the underlined portions out-loud in the round.

Note the way that Shakiya and Terrance underlined the Immortal Technique evidence in Figure 28, indicating the parts of the evidence that Shakiya read in the round. In the same way that Jay and Terrance had to be judicious and thoughtful about what to read when quoting directly from a source in their *Reparations* case, Shakiya and Terrance are also being very selective about what excerpts to read because of the limited amount of time for the speech. They want to make sure to read the portions of the evidence that they will need to reference throughout the debate round as evidentiary support for their argument about the a priori condition for action: knowing one's worth and loving oneself, which for Terrance and Shakiya, means loving all aspects of their Blackness, in order to get the strength and the will to fight against oppressive forces and material conditions—for it is the lack of self-love that fuels political and social apathy. As Technique says with respect to his own social location as a Latin@, the system of colonialism is what has "kept us subservient instead of being self determined. That's why we have no control over when the embargo will stop in Cuba, or when the bombs will stop dropping in Vieques." As the topic of the year is about United States engagement in Latin America, this particular quote is important in pointing to a root cause perpetuating and sustaining colonial violence in Latin America. Absent self-affirming critical consciousness, those mired in the throes of (neo)colonialism will never be able to generate the necessary will to discover the possibilities to transform their material realities and conditions of oppression (Freire, 1970).

There is another sentence that is underlined in the Technique evidence that also deserves attention: “I’m quite sure that people look upon my attitude and sentiments and look for hypocrisy and hatred in my words. My revolution is born out of love for my people, not hatred for others.” This inclusion is strategic. Terrance and Shakiya know that some people have pointed to some of Technique’s bars to argue that he spreads hate through music. Technique has said some things that the debaters definitely disagree with, however, this doesn’t change how they feel about his work overall. In the same way that Mickey and John disidentified with a normative interpretation of the 2012-2013 national high school policy debate resolution, that could mean supporting the transportation of bodies while “leaving the soul and culture of the people behind,” Shakiya and Terrance also disidentify with some of Technique’s bars on a few of his songs and they also want to give Technique the airtime to defend himself in the round by reading that sentence in the evidence that also demonstrates his philosophical alignment with the heart of Terrance and Shakiya’s argument: love.

Shakiya next describes the importance of having a more nuanced understanding of the past that doesn’t obfuscate the unique experiences faced by Black women: “They *assume* that history is the *same* for *everyone*. The history of Black males is not the same for Black women. When we were on plantations *we* were the ones that got raped.” Similar to other Black feminists like Patricia Hill-Collins (2009) and bell hooks (1981; 2000), Shakiya is calling attention to the critical importance of understanding not only race, but also gender in order to understand oppression. She also locates herself as an agent of change, as well as three other Black women in the debate community, one of whom was judging the round, who serve as role models, wells of inspiration, and provide intellectual mentorship for Shakiya and many other young Black and Brown female debaters.

> They also assume that they can solve for everyone but what about *me*. Nothing in their case is specifically, specific towards gender. What about the empowerment of Black women? Who were the ones who got their right to freedom first because it certainly wasn't women. My very presence being here is an exact disruption of civil society and that Eurocentric thought that is present in debate. I am *also* that source of liberation. When they make these false ambiguous claims. When you look at Black women such as Shanara Reid-Brinkley, Ameena and Korey are the ones I can truly look up to. Those are the ones who are advocating for revolutionary young women. And it should be a disgrace that you should run this type of affirmative when there are people you know who are actually fighting in the community right here right now. When I go to these tournaments and how could you possibly understand how *I* feel when I get up and speak as if I'm not debating. I can bet any type of money that if we didn't have our bids[55] when I am debating. If we didn't have our bids people wouldn't recognize me as not only a person but as a debater. I have to *work* for this.

With these last six words, Shakiya begins to cry. There is about 20 seconds left on the clock and although she is no longer filling up her remaining speech time with words, her tears are text. They spoke of the last three years that she had experienced as a Black woman in debate, not to mention being a Black woman in the larger society. Given that there are only a handful of Black women who have reached such a level of success in competitive academic policy debate, at both a high school and college level combined, she is not expected to rise through the ranks of a White, hetero-patriarchal, able-bodied, male dominated activity. Shakiya is expected to fail, to be not even a blip on the radar, too insignificant to ever be remembered in the annals of debate. But not only is Shakiya defying those insulting predictions and expectations, she is doing it by advocating *Black Gold*, Black self-love, and Black feminism by blending academic texts with Hip-Hop culture and personal narratives, and leveraging multiple literacies and her own words to expand the academic discourse in debate to make more room for critical epistemologies, Black female bodies, and to create a space for her to be able to pass on to younger Black female debaters, what she has learned from her own experience and her Black female mentors who are "the ones who are advocating for revolutionary young women." Consequently, Shakiya points out, "My very presence being here is an exact disruption of civil society and that Eurocentric thought that is present in debate. I am *also* that source of liberation."

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[55] She is referring to the minimal of two bids that are necessary for admission to the Tournament of Champions, the Olympics of high school competitive academic policy debate. These bids function as currency, social and political capital, in the debate community. The more bids a team has, the more respect they get. The bids are supposed to be a reflection of one's membership in the highest echelons of the activity.

For her other two years in high school debate (her senior year was her third year in the activity), Shakiya was on the verge of quitting multiple times. This should come as no surprise because it takes a tremendous amount of strength to deal with how others treat her at tournaments where she gets up to speak and is treated "as if [she] is not debating." She felt this way from the start of her debate career. In the summer of 2012, she wrote on her ILDI application that she wanted to be "less timid" and was "eager to be 'known.'" But even in her junior year she and Terrance were frequently just referred to as "Terrance"—as if Shakiya was not on the team. Given the racial and gender bias in debate, in order to get recognized "not only as a person but as a debater," Shakiya had to go above and beyond what would be required for someone who wasn't a woman and wasn't Black. She says, "I can bet any type of money that if we didn't have our bids[56] when I am debating, if we didn't have our bids, people wouldn't recognize me as not only a person but as a debater. I have to *work* for this."

But here in this quarterfinal round, Shakiya released that pain of invisibility and exposed it to her peers. Through her spoken word, she unlocks her power and demonstrates her resilience (Asante, 2003) in the face of interlocking systems of oppression (Collins, 2009). Shakiya's voice roared like a lioness. She is unwilling to stay silent on the matter of racism and sexism propagated against Black women inside and outside the debate community. She is seizing the mic and holding her peers accountable for their words and actions. And she is calling for not only reflective thinking but also for collective material action rooted in humanism and a genuine concern for the well being of others (Asante, 2003). She is calling for praxis (Freire, 1970) because thinking without action leaves no possibility for concrete social transformation.

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[56] She is referring to the minimal of two bids that are necessary for admission to the Tournament of Champions, the Olympics of high school competitive academic policy debate. These bids function as currency, social and political capital, in the debate community. The more bids a team has, the more respect they get. The bids are supposed to be a reflection of one's membership in the highest echelons of the activity.

Shakiya's five-minute negative rebuttal speech further illuminates the connections between her literacy practices and critical literacy and Black feminism. She explains that she doesn't just insulate herself in the game of debate, hording knowledge and the riches of her success from others, but she shares what she has learned and mentors others. In the types of arguments she chooses to run, is not just so she can win, but so she can share counter-dominant histories and revitalize connections with a rich African legacy through *Black Gold*, and expand the scope of what can be debated and what knowledge, literacies, languages and bodies are considered worthy of attention. Her reasons for debating are no less than an effort to "reshape the educational sphere," as she explains how the way she wields arguments and words in debate is a reflection of how she is "actively invested in [her] community...not only for [her] personal benefit" but for everyone else who is dehumanized through historical amnesia and, Eurocentric and anti-Black histories, curricula, policies and discursive and cultural norms. She is fighting not only on behalf of the oppressed, but for restoring the humanity of oppressors as well (Freire, 1970). She is not waiting for someone else to liberate her; she is using her literacies to liberate herself:

> We are the ones who gave birth to the revolution. Don't let them come up here in the 1AR and let them claim that they solve for me cus they know nothing about Black women and oppression and suffering. They don't understand my social location and my positioning. I dare [my opponent] to get up in the 1AR and tell me that I am not part of this type of liberation or the revolution for women. The framing of the 1AC is inherently flawed because it does not claim to resolve the suffering of Black women. The only

> women that they cite is within the political sphere but what about those who are actually trying to get there, who are trying to make their presence known? When I am outside of debate I take approaches to actually change and reshape the educational sphere. I help in my community and it is not only for my personal benefit. When I go to my sociology class and I learn about the relationship of Black women and the social sphere, I ask my professors so many questions about why she thinks that we're oppressed. And she tells me that women aren't standing up enough and she applauds me when I'm actually debating and she applauds the effort that I have actually invested in my community, this Black community. She recognizes and she understands that if people understand outside of this space and remember how we were and when, we solve back for the impacts of the 1AC, because we are the next step. We are damned right that I am somebody's ghost because I am viewed as invisible. When do they give me life? They can't because I have to take that shit for myself. I have to work for it in history. I have to fight for everything. I gave birth to commodities only for me not to enjoy the fruits of my labor, which is exactly why I am the way that I am. We were still able to value kinships, so don't tell me that the aff understands all types of positioning for everything.

Shakiya knows that she has changed. It was in that round that she evicted the haters, passivity, and doubt; she was seizing ownership over herself, her words, and her future. She reminds everybody in the room, but particularly her opponents whom she has known since the summer of 2012, "Don't you guys remember when I was passive, right?" She slows down here and looks over at her colleagues and tells them she has changed into a "revolutionary fighter;" and she presents an anecdote of one of her experiences she had had over the weekend tournament to demonstrate how she came to understand that not only has she changed, she has transformed herself into a "role model":

> Now I am making my name known, something that I never would have *imagined*. This is supposed to be a safe space where we can actually acknowledge everybody. My resistance inside this space will spill over once you see the truth in my words. I am that revolutionary fighter. I am that role model. I was approached this morning by a young female at Starbucks and she said 'congrats.' I said 'how did you know?' And she said that Crow Hill ST advances to everything and I wish I was like you.'

Having this young woman whom Shakiya did not know, approach her and congratulate her because she and Terrance, Crow Hill ST, consistently advances past preliminary rounds into elims at debate tournaments, sent a strong signal to Shakiya. After feeling invisible, and even sub-human, for a good part of her debate career, not to mention in many spaces outside of debate, hearing this young woman tell her "I wish I was like you," resonated deeply with Shakiya. Armed with the faith that her colleagues like Terrance, Mickey, and John had in her, who knew the value in her words, and hearing someone tell her how much they looked up to her, so much so that they said the wished they were her, Shakiya began to see herself as someone who could inspire others to take up the torch to fight for social transformation, because the way in which she leveraged her words and literacies in debate was such that she could "actually engage the oppressed" through meaningful dialogue by making her arguments intelligible and her literacies translatable to those inside and outside of debate in the service of social justice and improving conditions in the Black community:

> Understand what Immortal Technique said: 'There will be someone to follow the revolution. There will be support even if I am still not here.' They understand what I am fighting for. Like that lady at Starbucks and the young ones like [Mickey]. Extend when I say this coming out of the 1N[57] about the best method we can use to actually engage the oppressed and actually make this translatable to those who are actually giving back to the community, to the Black community.

Shakiya positions her mode of communication and ontological arguments as standing in stark opposition to the negative's afro-pessimism. She says that as afro-pessimists, her opponents foreclose on opportunities for dialogue and exploration of a much longer and more complex historical past for Blacks. By locating the beginning of Black history in the Middle Passage and dismissing everything before that point in time, Shakiya argues that they are excising and erasing out of history the existence of African queens and kings, some of the oldest democratic societies, thousands of languages and religions, and "some of the most amazing artists and scientists that ever walked the face of the earth" (Spaulding, 2012, cited by Shakiya and Terrance in *Black Gold*). Shakiya demands that people remember and see assets, not just deficits, in the histories and ontological positioning of Black bodies. She and Terrance situate themselves as Black youth who come from a rich lineage of African intellects, artists, leaders, and scientists, to demonstrate how Black people are not just rootless byproducts of a violently forced corporeal transportation and enslavement. And even after the Middle Passage, there are countless orators, scholars, mathematicians, artists, teachers, leaders, engineers, upon whose shoulders Shakiya and Terrance stand. Shakiya argues that by locating the beginning of the text before the Middle Passage, and restoring and preserving a more comprehensive and complete history of Black people and culture rich with assets, then wealth and humanity within the African Diaspora can better be projected into and reproduced in debate and into the future. Furthermore, Shakiya argues that this cannot be possible without recognizing how patriarchy and racism work together to create oppressive conditions and limit healthy and life-affirming spaces for Black women inside and outside debate. She says that talking about anti-Blackness without also talking about gender prevents any real understanding of oppression or anti-Blackness, including the way in which Black women uniquely experience anti-Blackness because it is coupled with patriarchy. If debate is supposed to be a space to expose and eradicate anti-Blackness, then one immediate move toward this end is to recognize when, where, and how debates around anti-Blackness fall short. Here, Shakiya says her opponents are failing to address how Black women are silenced and sidelined in debate and in the larger society. Shakiya argues that Black feminist standpoint epistemology can help provide a theoretical framework for action to address this:

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[57] Shakiya is referring to her first negative constructive speech.

> The method that the neg[58] provides to help the community, they don't actually engage in that dialogue. What does that do for me? The only thing that you guys pretty much need to understand is that their method is only talking about reevaluating and understanding the past from the Middle Passage. They don't examine history truly. Once we take that step back and actually understand before the Middle Passage can we understand who we actually were as Black individuals and Black females and how we can understand how that can project into the future. Their only method is this type of reevaluation and remembering but we remember—we understand. I'm pretty sure that everyone else in this room understands the Middle Passage, post Middle Passage, and before Middle Passage. Now the best thing we can do is go beyond this and actually help the community. So when I'm here in debate and when I'm not here in debate, I still help out the community. I still understand what we still have to do, what is we still need to do and how I actually can do that inside the debate community and outside the debate community. Once you understand that I'm not just this person in debate, I'm not just half a person, then you can understand that we can solve, not just me, but actually Black women in general. And when they don't take into account the positioning of the oppressed and of the Black female, and they don't understand, then they truly haven't reevaluated their own case, which is actually a turn if they don't understand what is actually going on with me not in debate and in debate. *We* actually have to work for this stuff. It's not just action versus inaction. So you're either going to vote for the neg which is this type of action or you can vote for the aff which is this type of inaction cus they only give lip service to what they actually plan on doing because they don't actually do *shit*. They do nothing for the debate community because they only talk about it. If they only talk about it, how are they actually going to engage with the debate community and actually change something to actually know what they need to do to change what is actually happening."

Shakiya extends and further develops a number of arguments that she presented in her first negative speech: praxis, Black feminist standpoint epistemology, and the importance of having a fuller picture of history before the transatlantic slave trade. She articulates the differences between the negative's method of change (remembering the past starting with the Middle Passage) versus the affirmative's (having a more complete picture of the past and drawing upon Black feminism and the notion of praxis, to take what one learns in debate and apply that knowledge for creating change inside and outside of the debate community); and she explains the options the judges have for making their decision:

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[58] Shakiya is referring to the negative team.

> So you're either going to vote for the neg which is this type of action or you can vote for the aff which is this type of inaction cus they only give lip service to what they actually plan on doing because they don't actually do *shit*.

In making these comparisons she also appeals to what the judges already know:

> Their only method is this type of reevaluation and remembering but we remember—we understand. I'm pretty sure that everyone else in this room understands the Middle Passage, post Middle Passage, and before Middle Passage.

Additionally, in the context of Shakiya's overall speech, when she uses herself as an example and says, "I am not just this person in debate; I'm not just half a person," she is imploring others to recognize Black women in all of their complexities and abilities, and work to think critically in order to engage in transformative action. Furthermore, Shakiya is making an argument for the importance of directing the skills one learns in debate toward creating transformations within and outside the debate community.

After Shakiya graduated, we talked about how she felt before that quarterfinal round in December of 2013 and after when her feelings of invisibility started fading. We recalled how other teams would often refer to Crow Hill ST as "Terrance," and how teams would brazenly cut her off in cross-examination and fail to respond to arguments that she made in the round, this dismissal signaling a blatant disregard for her intellectual labor. She explained how she thought it was patriarchy and that either people weren't critically aware of how they perpetuated sexism in debate, or if they had some knowledge of patriarchy, it wasn't a real awareness it they weren't motivated to change their behavior:

> Maybe cus they're so used to knowing that you know it's usually two guys versus two guys and a guy judge so whatever I have to say doesn't really matter. Or the part where you want to over, what do you call that, like go over me when I'm trying to answer the question, you always speak louder and like try to ask another question when I'm trying to answer your question. Like trying to speak over me. Um, I don't know I think it's just patriarchy. I think it's just rooted where we are we just don't know it or we're not fully aware of it. Or we know about it but not enough to change it or change our actions toward it. (personal communication, May 21, 2015)

Helping others develop a deeper awareness of patriarchy was a major focus for how Shakiya used her literacies in debate. A major motivating factor behind Shakiya's debating her senior year was grounded in an expressed interest to expose patriarchy along side anti-Blackness not only in texts or speeches, but also in larger discourses that give rise to patriarchal and anti-Black textual productions. By definition, she was a feminist, one who is fighting against sexism, embracing a feminism that bell hooks (2000) calls "a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (p.1). Hooks sought a definition that "implies that all sexist thinking and action is the problem, whether those who perpetuate it are female or male, child or adult. It is also broad enough to include an understanding of systemic institutionalized sexism" (p. 1). While hooks does not forget about race, others making moves against sexism, can fall short in accounting for the way in which race also plays a role. Consequently, Shakiya's debating was heavily informed by Black feminist thought from Dr. Kimberly Crenshaw to Dr. Brittany Cooper.

Finding solid ground in Black feminism, in a 2015 interview with Shakiya, she recalls Scranton as marking a major shift in how she saw herself and how she navigated debate: "It's like wow! What I can say really can make a difference; and I was like wow I didn't know that much. And I learned a lot about myself, too. I was able to speak up during cross ex but during Terrance's speech, too." (personal communication, May 21, 2015)

For the last two minutes of the negative's last five-minute rebuttal speech, in rare form, Terrance passes the mic to Shakiya who finishes his speech. Given that Shakiya is a Black woman and she and Terrance are running an argument rooted in Black feminism, for which Shakiya was the driving force, for the first time in their debate partnership, Terrance seems to recognize that he shouldn't take control of the wheel; there are times when he may not be the best spokesperson, times when he needs to take a back seat to Black women who have the right to represent themselves with their own voices, as opposed through the mouths of Black male leaders.

Shakiya doesn't hesitate to finish the last negative rebuttal and she sounds even more confident than she did during her previous two speeches. Rhyming words for poetic appeal, repeating words for intensification (see Table 6), speeding up and slowing down to linger on certain lines, she sounds like a spoken word poet, an experienced Black orator. Instead of providing the transcript of Shakiya's speech in paragraph form, to reflect the lyrical nature of her language use in her speech (Woodyard, 2003)—creative poetics, rhythm, distinct pattern of pausing, use of repetition, and punctuated clauses—I break up the sentences in her speech (or verse) into bars, or individual lines in a verse. A typical bar lasts for four beats with a 2/4-time signature. The italics represent words that she emphasizes. The underlined portions represent when she slows down and punches every word.

Her first two bars function like an intro to a song. Unlike Terrance who is speaking close to 400 words a minute in the first three minutes of the second negative rebuttal (2NR), Shakiya speaks in a slow conversational manner to jump off her verse:

So you guys thought I was done, right?
You guys you guys thought I was finished?

She then initiates a unique flow that makes a number of arguments including: (1) why she debates; (2) the epistemological and ontological growth that debate should make possible; and (3) the epistemological thinking that contributes to anti-Blackness. She calls out her colleagues on the affirmative team as being myopic, unknowingly adopting the same type of narrow thinking that makes such things like the fluidity of Whiteness and the Middle Passage possible. She also calls them out for an oversimplified articulation about how Whiteness operates and reminds them that White people are capable of recognizing their privilege and that their ontological work to make this happen should be recognized.

This is the *norm* within *debate* that chu *need* to *stop* and *understand*
We can't *continue* this *Whiteness*
The *joke* is on *you.*
Because I'm not doin this for *myself*
but for the *others* in the *Black debate* community:
Makayla, Korey, Ameena, Brooke,
Shanara, Toya, Ion, and Tianna—
all you *Black* female debaters and *coaches*
that have *helped* me out and *shown* me the way.
Also, *debate* is *supposed* to open *up* our perspectives:
There is *more* to debate than just *framework*.
There is *more* to debate than just compromising to all you *White* people
and *Whiteness,* that is *fluid* in the debate community.
They want to *use* the past to create the *tools* for the *future*.
But they look at the *wrong* part of the past.
What do you think *created* civil society?
What do you think *actually* perpetuates *Whiteness*?
It's the *same thinking* that thinks that there *isn't* something that came *before* the Middle *Passage*.
Their framework in debate is *completely wrong*.
Eli, Ameena, Iggy,
do you really know what you are voting for when you vote for aff?
Do you *know* what they're *saying*
and *how* they're *actually* going to do this?
They *only* got to the "new sheet" with *only 39 seconds, right.*
(she slows down and repeats).
They only understood me for 39 seconds.
Instead of *blaming* these White people
how bout you *understand* your own flaws.
It's *cool* that you have remembered but *what now*?

If you were *really* with me at *ILDI,*
then you would at *least* have the decency to *tailor* or *frame* your case
around us specifically,
because we are *not* Whiteness.
We are trying to *engage whichu* and the debate community.
You don't try to actually understand *shit*.
But when your *aff* is specific to the *resolution* and *traditional* debate,
how does that account for *me*?
What more do I have to do or *show*
that *I am* the *step after* remembering?
I *am* the *ghost*
because I am *invisible* when you *want* me to be.
And I can *haunt you* when you feel *threatened*.
Look at your *audience*.
Do you *see* the debater in the back who is *actually* shedding *tears*?
You cannot tell me that she does not remember her privilege,
that she does not understand.
You cannot—
What do you propose what she should do *now*?
What do you propose that us women do *now*?
We are the only thing,
we are the only ones who can do *shit* for us women.
They don't give me nuthin
because I don't need anything from them.

To make her argument persuasive, Shakiya uses repetition for intensification (Woodyard, 2003). She plays with rhythm, cadence, and vocal modulations. She takes the negative's metaphor of the past haunting the present and flips it on them. She is blending African American rhetorics with Aristotelian modes of persuasion. Shakiya has grown as a public speaker and she has developed into a young woman who has demonstrated faith in her own capabilities, in her values, in her knowledge, and in her commitment to being a leader.

Table 6

Shakiya's Use of Repetition for Intensification

Word/Phrase	Repetition
You guys	2
Understand	4
There is more	2

What do you think	2
Do you know	2
Only 39 seconds	2
What do you propose	2
Only	5
Actually	4
I am	3
You cannot	2

Table 6. Shakiya's Use of Repetition for Intensification

Terrance also made similar moves in his speeches during his senior year. Like much of his debating his senior year that reflected how he had been working to strengthen his delivery, language and argument precision, and his warrants to arguments, Terrance’s spoken text in his constrictive speech blends Black English, Dominant American English, debate lingo, and Hip-Hop language to make an argument in support of the necessity of praxis and taking critical transformative action against conditions of oppression.

Additionally, Terrance took to heart what Fernando Kirkman wrote on his ballot when he judged Terrance and Shakiya at the national UDL tournament in Washington D.C. in April of 2013 (see chapter five). Kirkman told the debaters that they could improve their delivery, argument precision, and warranting of claims. In the excerpt that follows, Terrence uses multiple examples and warrants, and with precision, explains how it is not enough to engage in empty rhetoric or intangible philosophical musings, and explains how the debaters should be applying their language, literacies and research skills to investigate and generate concrete ways to ameliorate violence, racial profiling, inequalities in housing and education, and to “stop these magnetized bullets of poverty that’s happening.”

In the following excerpt from Scranton in December of 2013, Terrance emphasizes the importance of using educational spaces not just to philosophize or research for the sake of research, but to engage in collective action research (Asante, 2003), exclaiming numerous times, “Do better!” As he delivers his speech, he not only defends his and Shakiya’s advocacy around the critical importance of praxis and action research, but throughout his speech he is identifying every argument the affirmative team made in the first affirmative rebuttal and answers them point by point. This line-by-line refutation is a rhetorical skill that Terrance has been refining since the summer of 2012 and has now demonstrating a much greater level of mastery. Additionally, he is not only demonstrating his ability to more effectively advance an argument by drawing from multiple linguistic registers and rhetorics, but he is also using language to successfully defend an argument by methodically and efficiently responding to each and every attack against it. Each time he says, “they say” or “they speak about” Terrance is directly referring to one of his opponents’ arguments.

> They say we need we need to remember, remember, remember remember. Well we’ve *been* remembering. We need to recognize what’s happening *now* on the micro level in these instances in modern day society…They don’t even speak about the tangible realities that they face on a daily basis. They don’t speak about the idea of engaging in politics and government, rather the 1AC is only predicated only off of that philosophical questioning, but they’re not questioning what are we supposed to *do* in these sort of situations…like what happens when we get stopped by cops, their answer is that we should just *remember*. We’re saying that’s *problematic*…that’s the Immortal Technique evidence that philosophizing about freedom. If you have a gun to your face, what does remembering do to stop the bullet? What does that do to address the questions of anti-Blackness on an economical and tangible level? They don’t answer the question of how do we stop these magnetized bullets of poverty that’s happening: the bad education, gang violence . Look to Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle and the tangible realities that they are taking. When they build debate institutions, they engage in these modes of politics and speak about tactics of liberation for survival, which the 1AC never answers. Come on son, like we from ECLI we talk about making change and the best they can say is that they remember. We need to do better. Do better! They do not account for the community, this is not the idea of being able to love Blackness, rather they speak about what benefits them as individuals in the debate round, saying that they think the 1AC is a good idea but when do we ever get to the analysis of what they do for the larger community and how we can actually engage in forms of politics. Understanding debate is messed up is okay and shit, but what do we *do* to resolve those unique conditions? We can’t only just be the discursive philosophizing about freedom. They need to do some shit for the community. How do they work on the macro level? That’s a fundamental question. The micro level is only taken in the context of the 1AC. The negative ballot affirms the idea of shifting the discussion from the philosophical to what we can do on the tangible level to resolve the questions of the community.

> They speak about how we need a counter method. Our counter method is to use the debate space to speak about actions that we can take. Let's speak about political actions to have forums and discussions that include White people in it so we can break down this sort of Eurocentric paradigm. Do we start to go outside and engage in other institutions or engage with other debaters? We're speaking about what do we *do*. We're speaking about taking pragmatic action. *That's* what we should be debating about. We should be debating about which policy versus which policy, which method versus which method of change, not whether the 1AC is a good idea or not about some philosophical idea of freedom.
>
> They say, they say, some shit about the people who are watching. Yeah, the people who are watching that's what you should be talking about, the actions they should be taking. You never talk about what the White body should do or what the Black body should do, you just speak about remembering….
>
> They say we need to interrogate our relationship with the past. We've already been doing that….

As this 17-year-old scholar deploys oral language in a five-minute speech that is mostly freestyled because each team gets only a total of eight to ten minutes of preparation time to use throughout the debate round, he demonstrates the importance of oral language in composition; there is *no way* Terrance could compose that five-minute speech ahead of time in print, even if he used all of his and Shakiya's prep time. Yet even on the fly his speech is imbued with language around power, race, philosophy, and education. He further explains and develops his and Shakiya's advocacy and also refutes their opponents' claim that they ameliorate anti-Blackness through the practice of remembering untethered to any other corresponding material action. Compared to previous years, Terrance speaks with more ease, depth, and precision, using a broad and sophisticated vocabulary borrowed from his engagement with critical theory (Table 7), supporting arguments with multiple warrants, and he more effectively leverages and extends evidentiary support and examples that have already been presented in one of the previous speeches in the debate round.

> They say that they resolve the question of anti-Blackness and that we become complacent with those forms of power. 1) They don't resolve anti-Blackness. They don't speak about what we do in any tangible reality; rather they only speak about a sort of epistemological approach that doesn't answer the question of how anti-Blackness is expressed. Anti-

Blackness is an analysis of paradigm which requires a structural paradigmatic analysis on how it's expressed which requires an interrogation of racial profiling, poverty, housing, the educational standards and things like that. They never answer the fundamental question of what do we do about *that*. Meaning they can never resolve the way that anti-Blackness is expressed structurally in society. We're not complacent with these forms of power but we are speaking out against these forms of power...Immortal Technique is realizing the harsh reality he's having on a daily basis. What he does is that he argues that no one is acknowledging the tangible realities saying that he actually needs to go out and actually engage the people. It's talking about the important difference of a supporter versus a fan. The 1AC is looking for the ideas of fans. They're looking for you to say that they're a good damn idea. The supporter is speaking about the idea that the revolution will continue whether we are here or not, whether there is a 1AC or whether there isn't a 1AC, which is what we speak about on a daily basis. When you (referring to the judges on the panel) engage and help the younger debaters here and your coaches here, you (referring to his opponents) are saying that their epistemology is ontologically invalid to strive for those ideas. That's what we're talking about. We're talking about how we need to give back to the community that's the reason we need to start shifting our focus. Immortal Technique is specifically f'ing that idea that we should be just talking, talking about the idea that this sort of philosophizing about freedom is inaccessible to those who face this on a daily reality living in poverty or facing police brutality. Who has the time or the ability to bullshit and think about freedom?

They say they're not intellectual masturbation. But let's look back at the context of their advocacy statement. Their advocacy statement is probably the most philosophical stupidness I've ever seen in my life: The say 'we the oppressed must raise the specter to substantially increase the [inaudible] of immobility in the belly of the beast so that we can puncture holes in the walls or in its stomach, finding where liberation as impossible making it all the more possible and beautiful.' Right. We can remember but what does that actually do for us on a structural level. We're saying that their whole 1AC is philosophically flawed.

They only do the analysis on the poetry. They speak about how it cannot be translated to language. That's the problem: that we can't translate the 1AC's language, so how can we actually start to navigate between the people? How can we begin to start the discussion or make coalitions that can speak back to the structures of oppression? We're saying that you have questions that need to be resolved.

And they say that discussion is non unique and that civil society is big. It's not a question of whether civil society is big or not it's a question of how we start to resolve those. The methodology does not have to be big but methodology must be specific so we can start to understand what we're supposed to do on a structural level. We think that this debate should be about what specific methodologies are key for liberation not some vague analysis or talking.

They say in the 1AC that Black progress is in a stasis. They only keep it locked in a stasis because they don't speak about what we can do to change those realities.

They say they represent the stories never told. They never present any stories. They only use people opportunistically about what's best to give them a better advantage in debate. They can reference Audre Lorde, they can reference Eldridge Cleaver, but where is the standpoint epistemology in the 1AC? And which viewpoint are they actually

> speaking from? They tell the story of no one but the story of themselves. They speak about philosophical remembering. Who are they remembering? What is their point of remembering?
>
> They say that these sort of ideas are covered up, but they're not covered up. Now let's talk about the debaters who are actually here. It's me, Shakiya, Wilson, them, and the three judges in the back of the room. What histories are being covered up?
>
> They say that modernity is trying to erase history, but where is modernity here?

Table 7

Words from Critical Theory in Terrance's Speech.

Philosophizing	Anti-Blackness	Epistemology	Paradigmatic analysis	Freedom
Power	Revolution	Liberation	Ontologically	Methodology
Modernity	Discursive	Pragmatic	Paradigm	

Table 7. Words from critical theory in Terrance's speech.

Terrance intentionally uses certain words and phrases repeatedly to make them stick out and resonate with the judges and spectators. These words and phrases function either to organize his speech, as is the case of "they say" which Terrance uses to signal he is answering his opponents' arguments, or to reinforce the importance of transformative action or values. (Table 8).

Table 8

Terrance's use of Repetition for Effect

Word/Phrase	Repetition	Transformative Action	Values	Organizing Function
They don't	6			x
They say	6			
Do better	2	x	x	
Speak about	14			x
Freedom	5	x	x	
Tangible	6	x	x	
Action	4	x	x	
Liberation	3	x	x	
Community	5		x	
Talking about	5			x
Question(s)(ing)	12			
Philosophizing	3			
Poverty	3		x	
Power	3		x	

Table 8. Terrance's Use of Repetition for Effect.

Breathing life into words through thoughtful choices around repetition, cadence, flow, emphasis, and poetic illustrations like “stop these magnetized bullets of poverty,” and calling for transformative action, Shakiya and Terrance’s speeches reflect “the generative and productive power of the spoken word” (Asante, 1987, p. 17).

While Shakiya and Terrance might sound harsh at times in the above transcripts, whenever they debated other teams from the UDL, they were debating their family. In debating their family, Terrance and Shakiya, like Mickey and John, felt charged with a responsibility to challenge and call out their family when necessary, but this was all in the interest of pushing each other to be better scholars, speakers, critical researchers, activists, and leaders. Across all of the debate rounds their senior year, Shakiya and Terrence stressed the importance of being to advance personal and collective liberation. To this end, they expressed their awareness of the role that oral language plays in this process because collective deliberation over problems and generating the necessarily public will to seek out and execute possible solutions requires the ability to communicate effectively and persuasively and intelligibly across contexts and cultures. This demands the utmost thoughtfulness around word choice, delivery, providing sufficient explanations with relatable examples, which is what Terrance reminds his family when he tells them the problem with their argument: “That’s the problem: that we can’t translate the 1AC’s language, so how can we actually start to navigate between the people? How can we begin to start the discussion or make coalitions that can speak back to the structures of oppression?” To illustrate how the affirmative advocacy to “remember the past” is philosophizing, and that without action, cannot protect anyone from danger or advance people forward toward a future that is socially just and liberated, Terrance uses a clear hypothetical example: “If you have a gun to your face, what does remembering do to stop the bullet?” He says that debaters should:

> use the debate space to speak about actions that we can take. Let's speak about political actions to have forums and discussions that include White people in it so we can break down this sort of Eurocentric paradigm. Do we start to go outside and engage in other institutions or engage with other debaters? We're speaking about what do we *do*. We're speaking about taking pragmatic action. *That's* what we should be debating about. We should be debating about which policy versus which policy, which method versus which method of change, not whether the 1AC is a good idea or not about some philosophical idea of freedom.

Shakiya makes a similar move when she talks about the importance of teaching each other and sharing ideas for change, which she says requires seeking out "the best method we can use to actually engage the oppressed and actually make this translatable." Yet both Shakiya and Terrance recognized that this was easier said than done. Engagement also required an ontological shift, which is why Terrance and Shakiya ran *Love* throughout the year.

At first *Love* was created as a response to the growing popularity of afro-pessimistic debate arguments. Terrance explains that

> it was supposed to be more of a negation strategy about, for afro-pessimism, and how you're not always at a site of social death, like um, you're not always at a site of suffering, there are other positives, things, reasons to not always be pessimistic about existence. (personal communication, December 04, 2014)

Even though Terrance and Shakiya disagreed with their peers who were self-proclaimed afro-pessimists (see Mickey's essay in Figure 22 from chapter five) and their motivation for creating and running *Love* was initially a strategic answer to afro-pessimism arguments, after "reading more into the literature base" it evolved into "a stance towards the world" because as Terrance explained, "we should always be affirming, instead of affirm *in response* to existence" (personal communication, December 04, 2014). Regardless or not if teams were running afro-pessimism arguments, Terrance saw the value in running *Love* in and of itself: it was a necessary prerequisite for political action, personal liberation, and for seeing value in living:

> ...when I talk about self-love it's about being able to find value in yourself, um motivation, reason to live, any aspirations, or just being able to kind of affirming in positive ways, so however that affirmation occurs is how you need to be an individual. The affirmation is necessary because if you don't find value in yourself you won't find value in people who look like you or find reason to engage in like counter-dominant strategies because you won't see yourself as like worthy of liberation. I think that's just an important thing in all round discussions. And even like, even like, just like in general, in education, debate rounds, high school, you only learn the dominant narrative. Like even if you study Black history they'll be like oh, slavery, that was a thing, and then there was civil rights, like everything about *the struggle*—there's like no connection to any positive affirmations. Like you talk about Hip-Hop, like there's no positive affirmations of Hip-Hop only problems about it. They don't speak about its origination. They don't speak about the connections to African civilizations that have produced substantial things that have benefited the world, like that, which I think are important for just recontextualizing how you see yourself, and suffering. (personal communication, December 04, 2014)

From what Terrance says here, critical literacy is impossible without self-love. If a person doesn't love herself or himself, they will have no will to fight for social change. Without seeing the value in oneself, without loving oneself, then one can't begin to "engage in counter-dominant strategies" because one won't see oneself as "worthy of liberation;" and, for some, without love, there might not even be a reason to keep on living. Terrance argues that this love is difficult to generate with the lack of positive affirmations about Black history, culture, and people in education, the media and debate. Consequently, Terrance said that researching, writing and sharing *Love* (as well as *Black Gold*) was about "recontextualizing how you see yourself, and suffering" to get the will to fight for one's freedom and humanity.

He further explained how "depression is a real thing" that can easily arise for a young Black scholar who is only learning about their history as "one predicated off of slavery...and in relationship to an American context...which talks about your ancestry as that of the object." He certainly doesn't disagree with teaching about slavery; he said that, "when that's the only thing that's being spoken about, that's the only way your understand your identity in relation to those structures so it's hard to think of yourself outside that framework." In debate, he said "when you do your own research you can think of yourself alternatively" and that this could be revolutionary:

> So if you know a lot of people with depression or if you have depression and then you're talking about like loving yourself and finding value within yourself and how that in itself is revolutionary, for you to live is like an act of resistance then for some people that is like the reason to live or the motivation to live or they have to find something to keep going. So when you can explain that that intertwines a lot more with your argument when you're talking about self love.

For Terrance these were literally *survival* literacies that signaled:

> your scholarship is uniquely important and you can explain it in terms of that as a survival tactic in that it reinvigorates the ability to live for people to want to live for people to respect themselves and each other and just like how that's linked so many other things in the world like a politics of respectably, um like gang violence like stuff like that, like people critique gang violence but a lot of that is predicated off of people not finding value in their own bodies or value in bodies of people who look like them. Things like the doll test, the doll test theory, like all these other things are related to the fact that you don't have respect for what people look like. And so like explaining that in a lot deeper—yeah that was it.

Yeah, *that was it:* survival through language and literacies.

Making Salsa: John and Mickey

For the Latin America topic, Salsa was the heartbeat of Mickey and John's affirmative case. It started in the summer of 2013 when John became interested in learning more about Salsa. Over the course of his research, he found a wealth of evidence that said how it was much more than a type of music or dance—it was also about Latin@ consciousness. In my interview with John, he told me, "I remember to listening to a whole lot of Celia Cruz that summer, and listening to a whole bunch of Tito Puente... Tegui Calderón" (personal communication, June 26, 2015) and he began to do research about them. He found a treasure trove of information in academic journals about how “songs by Celia Cruz all enhance an Afro-Latino aesthetic” about the performative and linguistic aspects of salsa and he told me, “and I'm just like, this is what we need to talk about—not because I'm interested in it, but because this is powerful stuff and it's true, right” (personal communication, June 26, 2015). John proceeded to break down the unique sociocultural and historical context surrounding the growth of Salsa in Harlem, New York and how it created a bridge between Puerto Ricans moving into Harlem and the Black Americans who were already living there, forging a bridge “between not only a group of people who diasporically had a relationship, but also...physically had a relationship because they were now neighbors and it created that environment”:

> And it's true to the core because in the 50s when the wave of Puerto Ricans arrived to the United States, they came to the East Coast cus Puerto Rico's closer to the East Coast, right? And they came specifically to New York because the United States had made an Operation Boot Strap, which was an analysis by the economists that understood that Puerto Rico uh had been hit deeper by the Great Depression, but World War II, and that they were already citizens but what are we going to do to industrialize the nation again? They said, well we need to change from agriculture to industry, but we also need to get a whole bunch of people out of there. So when they started, uh then they started sponsoring trips to, to New York and when they sponsored the trips, well they're not going to move into the lower side of Manhattan. They don't got money. They're not going to go in to the Lower East Sides, no.
>
> Robert Moses was also city planner at the time and White flight occurred, right? The Italians and the Jewish community from near Harlem started leaving as these Puerto Ricans were coming in, and the Jewish homes, the Jewish uh recreational centers that were once playing whatever they were doing, right, now started booming salsa. Cuban music. It was Cuban music first, right? That salsa's always been Cuban music. But then when Puerto Ricans came they started adding the drums a little harder to it. Uh they started adding the rhythm, the dance I mean the song started being fostered. The dance fostered itself in New York, and they had a home space, because of salsa music, right?
>
> So it's it's all about uh, Salsa was all about creating a home space, about creating a locust of annunciation, where we can speak about our pain, our struggle, and create our common-hood, because it created our common-hood with Black Americans in Harlem. And it was just beautiful to say that, to see that music created that gap, bridged that gap between not only a group of people who diasporically had a relationship, but also now uh, uh, uh, physically had a relationship because they were now neighbors and it created that environment. That's what really motivated me to create that (personal communication, June 26, 2015).

By being able breakdown a sociocultural and historical context for the development of Salsa in Harlem, *on the fly*—a practice that John and Mickey did in all of their debate rounds their senior year—he demonstrates a sophisticated level of critical reading comprehension and an ability to synthesize the vast literature base for Salsa. This time talking about Salsa instead of Hip-Hop, John explains how the music, the culture, "was all about creating a home space, about creating a locust of annunciation, where we can speak about our pain, our struggle, and create our common-hood, because it created our common-hood with Black Americans in Harlem."

John explained how they used Salsa as a pedagogical tool to deconstruct the 2013-2014 national high school debate resolution by providing a counter-dominant perspective on the topic. The *Salsa* affirmative debate case began with an excerpt of "Quimbara" by Celia Cruz (see Figure 29), because as Mickey and John describe in the text of their affirmative case,

> Celia Cruz was an Afro-Cuban woman who used Salsa hits such as Quimbara and Azucar Negra as a way to remind her listeners not only of her roots, but the basis for Cuba to exist, and the basis of a Cuban identity. As Latin@s we forget, via our lighter skin, or through the creation of "Mestizaje" that we have African roots, and black heritage.

Figure 29. "Quimbara" by Celia Cruz Used for Introduction to *Salsa* Debate Case

Celia Cruz "Quimbara" 0:00-0:35
[African Drums play in the background & Celia sings]

Quimbara quimbara quma quimbamba
Quimbara quimbara quma quimbamba
Quimbara quimbara quma quimbamba
Quimbara quimbara quma quimbamba
Ee Mama Ee Mama Ee Mama Ee Mama
:

Figure 29. "Quimbara" by Celia Cruz used for introduction to Salsa debate case.

Mickey and John reached back to the summer of 2012 and breathed new life into their genealogical investigation of Latin America in the context of economic engagement:

> Lets bring it back in time to Africa during the Middle Passage. Africans were forced to leave their homelands and went through a horrid voyage where mothers would jump off

> the boats with their children just to avoid a life of slavery. 75% of these voyages led Africans to areas like Cuba and other lands in the Caribbean and what we know as "Latin America." This is where modernity began, with this first act of economic engagement with Cuba. African culture became lost and the Black was created. The newly created black began to work on sugar plantations and create the basis for Cuban society. Indeed, blackness itself was grinded like the sugar cane in the mills to create other cultures, and other identities, in the Cuban Plantation.

After situating their sociocultural locations in the context of the Middle Passage, the two young scholars then establish anti-Blackness, or what they call here as the Death Ethics of War, as a conceptual framework for Salsa by integrating their annotation, interpretation, and extension of evidence written by Nelson Maldonado-Torres, an associate professor of comparative literature at Rutgers (see Figure 30). They then play another song by Celia Cruz, *Azucar Negra* (see Figure 31)*,* which Mickey and John say illustrates their advocacy which is supported by evidence written by Professor of Spanish and Portuguese and Director of the Latina and Latino Studies Program at Northwestern University, Frances R. Aparicio, about "Celia Cruz and the Performance of (Trans)Nationalism" (see Figure 32):

> In the spirit of Azucar Negra, vote Affirmative, because our performance accesses the root of Cuban economic engagement by beginning our analysis at the sugar plantations where it all began. The resolution calls for us to increase our economic engagement with Cuba, without getting to the basic question of what bonds Cubans, Dominicans, and Boricuas together; The root of our bond is the experience of the slave on the plantation. Only our Aff confronts the disconnect between America and Cuba and what it truly means to engage those people in those spaces.

Mickey and John conclude Salsa with a statement about the meaning of the role of the ballot and the performance of the 1AC in the debate round (see Figure 33).

Figure 30. Mickey and John Establish a Conceptual Framework for Salsa Affirmative Argument

See, the Middle Passage was not just a singular event, it created a colonial and anti-black matrix, which was structured off the death of the black, in which economic engagement between Cuba and the U.S. was based off sugar plantations, in which blacks were the slaves cutting the sugar cane, and working the sugar mills. This structure places us, the structurally damned in a permanent state of hell, in which we are open to rapeability and killability. This is the death ethics of war.

Nelson **Maldonado-Torres**, associate professor of comparative literature at Rutgers, **‘8** [Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity, p. 217-21] //DDI13

Dussel, Quijano, and Wynter lead us to the understanding that what happened in the Americas was a transformation and naturalization of the *non-ethics of war*—which represented a sort of exception to the ethics that regulate normal conduct in Christian countries—into a more stable and long-standing *reality of damnation*, and that this epistemic and material shift occurred in the colony. *Damnation, life in hell, is colonialism*: a reality characterized by the naturalization of war by means of the naturalization of slavery, now justified in relation to the very constitution of people and no longer solely or principally to their faith or belief. That human beings become slaves when they are vanquished in a war translates in the Americas into the suspicion that the conq uered people, and then non-European peoples in general, are *constitutively inferior* and that therefore they should assume a position of *slavery* and *serfdom*. Later on, this idea would be solidified with respect to the slavery of African peoples, achieving stability up to the present with the tragic reality of different forms of racism. Through this process, what looked like a "state of exception" in the colonies became the rule in the modern world. However, deviating from Giorgio Agarnben's diagnosis, one must say that the colony--long before the concentration camp and the Nazi politics of extermination--served as the testing ground for the limits and possibilities of modernity, thereby revealing its darkest secrets." It is race, the coloniality of power, and its concomitant Eurocentrism (and not only national socialisms or forms of fascism) that allow the "state of exception" to continue to define ordinary relations in this, our so-called postmodern world. Race emerges within a *permanent state of exception* where forms of behavior that are legitimate in war become a natural part of the ordinary way of life. In that world, an otherwise extraordinary affair becomes the norm and living in it requires extraordinary effort." In the racial/ colonial world, the "*hell" of war* becomes a condition that *defines the reality* of racialized selves, which Fanon referred to as the damnes de la terre (condemned of the earth). *The damne (condemned) is a subject who exists in a permanent "hell*," and as such, this figure serves as the main referent or liminal other that guarantees the continued affirmation of modernity as a paradigm of war. The hell of the condemned is not defined by the alienation of colonized productive forces, but rather signals the dispensability of racialized subjects, that is, the idea that the world would be fundamentally better without them. The racialized subject is ultimately a dispensable source of value, and exploitation is conceived in this context as due torture, and not solely as the extraction of surplus value. Moreover, it is this very same conception that gives rise to the particular erotic dynamics that characterize the relation between the master and its slaves or racialized workers. The condemned, in short, inhabit a context in which the confrontation with *death and murder is ordinary*. Their "hell" is not simply "other people," as Sartre would have put it-at least at one point - but rather racist perceptions that are responsible for the suspension of ethical behavior toward peoples at the bottom of the color line. Through racial conceptions that became central to the modern self, modernity and coloniality produced a *permanent state of war* that racialized and colonized subjects *cannot evade or escape*. The modern function of race and the coloniality of power, I am suggesting here, can be understood as a radicalization and naturalization of the non-ethics of war in colonialism." This non-ethics included the practices of eliminating and enslaving certain subjects-for example, indigenous and black-as part of the enterprise of colonization. From here one could as well refer to them as the *death ethics of war*. War, however, is not only about killing or enslaving; it also includes a particular treatment of sexuality and femininity: *rape*. Coloniality is an order of things that places people of color within the murderous and rapist view of a vigilant ego, and the primary targets of this rape are women. But men of color are also seen through these lenses and feminized, to become fundamentally penetrable subjects for the ego conquiro. Racial- ization functions through gender and sex, and the ego conquiro is thereby constitutively a phallic ego as well." Dussel. who presents this thesis of the phallic character of the ego cogito, also makes links, albeit indirectly, with the reality of war. And thus, in the beginning of modernity, before Descartes discovered ... a terrifying anthropological dualism in Europe, the Spanish conquistadors arrived in America. The phallic conception of the European-medieval world is now added to the forms of submission of the vanquished Indians. "Males," Bartolome de las Casas writes, are reduced through "the hardest, most horrible, and harshest serfdom"; but this only occurs with those who have remained alive, because many of them have died; however, "in war typically they only leave alive young men (mozos) and women.""5 The indigenous people who survive the massacre or are left alive have to contend with a world that considers them to be dispensable. And since their bodies have been conceived of as inherently inferior or violent, they must be constantly subdued or civilized, which requires renewed acts of conquest and colonization. The survivors continue to live in a world defined by war, and this situation is peculiar in the case of women. AsT. Denean Sharpley-Whiting and Renee T, White put it in the preface to their anthology Spoils oJ War: Women oJ Color, Cultures, and Revolutions: A sexist and/or racist patriarchal culture and order posts and attempts to maintain, through violent acts of force if necessary, the subjugation and inferiority of women of color. As Joy James notes, "its explicit, general premise constructs a conceptual framework of male [and/or white] as normative in order to enforce a politicaljracial, economic, cultural. sexual] and intellectual mandate of male [and/or white] as superior." The warfront has always been a "feminized" and "colored" space for women of color. Their experiences and perceptions of war, conA ict, resistance, and struggle emerge from their specific racial-ethnic and gendered locations ... Inter arma silent leges: in time of war the law is silent," Walzer notes. Thus, this volume operates from the premise that war has been and is presently in our midst." The links between war, conquest, and the exploitation of women's bodies are hardly accidental. In his study of war and gender, Joshua Goldstein argues that conquest usually proceeds through an extension of the rape and exploitation of women in wartime." He argues that to understand conquest, one needs to examine: I) male sexuality as a cause of aggression; 2) the feminization of enemies as symbolic domination; and 3) dependence on the exploitation of women's labor-including reproduction." My argument is, first, that these three elements came together in a powerful way in the idea of race that began to emerge in the conquest and colonization of the Americas. My second point is that through the idea of race, these elements exceed the activity of conquest and come to define what from that point on passes as the idea of a "normal" world. As a result, the phenomenology of a racial context resembles, if it is not fundamentally identical to, the phenomenology of *war and conquest*. Racism posits its targets as racialized and sexualized subjects that, once vanquished, are said to be inherently servile and whose bodies come to form part of an economy of sexual abuse, exploitation, and control. The coloniality of power cannot be fully understood without reference to the transformation and naturalization of war and conquest in modern times. *Hellish existence* in the colonial world carries with it both the racial and the gendered aspects of the naturalization of the non-ethics of war. "*Killability*" and "*rapeability*" are inscribed into the images of colonial bodies and deeply mark their ordinary existence. Lacking real authority, colonized men are permanently feminized and simultaneously represent a constant threat for whom any amount of authority, any visible trace of the phallus is multiplied in a symbolic hysteria that knows no lirnits.?" Mythical depiction of the black man's penis is a case in point: the black man is depicted as an aggressive sexual beast who desires to rape women, particularly white women. The black woman, in turn, is seen as always already sexually available to the rapist gaze of the white, and as fundamentally promiscuous. In short, the black woman is seen as a highly erotic being whose primary function is fulfilling sexual desire and reproduction. To be sure, any amount of "penis" in either one represents a threat, but in his most familiar and typical forms the black man represents the act of rape- "raping" -while the black woman is seen as the most legitimate victim of rape- "being raped." In an antiblack world black women appear as subjects who deserve to be raped and to suffer the consequences-in terms of a lack of protection from the legal system, sexual abuse, and lack of financial assistance to sustain themselves and their families-just as black men deserve to be penalized for raping, even without having committed the act. Both "raping" and "being raped" are attached to blackness as if they form part of the essence of black folk, who are seen as a dispensable population. Black bodies are seen as excessively violent and erotic, as well as being the legitimate recipients of excessive violence, erotic and otherwise." "Killability" and "rapeability" are part of their essence, understood in a phenomenological way. The "essence" of blackness in a colonial anti-black world is part of a larger context of meaning in which the *death ethics of war* gradually becomes a *constitutive part* of an allegedly normal world. In its modern racial and colonial connotations and uses, blackness is the invention and the projection of a social body oriented by the death ethics of war." This murderous and raping social body projects the features that define it onto sub-Others in order to be able to legitimate the same behavior that is allegedly descriptive of them. The same ideas that inspire perverted acts in war--particularly slavery, murder, and rape--are legitimized in modernity through the idea of race and gradually come to be seen as more or less normal thanks to the alleged obviousness and non-problematic character of black slavery and anti-black racism. To be sure, those who suffer the consequences of such a system are primarily blacks and indigenous peoples, but it also deeply affects all of those who appear as colored or close to darkness. In short, this system of symbolic representations, the material conditions that in part produce and continue to legitimate it, and the existential dynamics that occur therein (which are also at the same time derivative and constitutive of such a context) are part of a process that *naturalizes the non-ethics or death ethics of war*. Sub-ontological difference is the result of such naturalization and is legitimized through the idea of race. In such a world, ontology collapses into a Manicheanism, as Fanon suggested."

[Mickey and John's text now follows] This Death Ethics of War has persisted throughout history. Before the revolution, in 1912, the social death of blacks was evident. In 1912, the Partido Indepiendiente de Color (People of Color Party) and other groups of blacks advocated supporting separate institutions and movements that would ensure a "rightful share" for Cubans of color, and sought to end United States intervention in Cuba. This led to a government-sanctioned murder of these black advocates. The massacre that resulted in somewhere between five to six thousand actual deaths of blacks is not merely a metaphor. In 1952, Cuban dictator, Batista aligned with the wealthy owners of these sugar plantations and maintained the exploitation of afro-Cubanos, also keeping intact the segregation between white and black Cubanos which was brought to the island by American armed forces in 1898.
Now, even after the revolution, the position of the black as a slave hardly changed. Though the Castro administration destroyed legal segregation, it maintained the whitening practices inherent in Cuban culture. The overseer might have changed, but the Cuban Plantation remains.

Figure 30. Mickey and John establish a conceptual framework for their Salsa affirmative debate case.

Figure 31. Celia Cruz' *Azucar Negra* from the *Salsa* 1AC

Celia Cruz –Azucar Negra (Black Sugar)
(0:00 -00:46) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tedY6jbPpQM
[Soy dulce como el melao'
alegre como el tambor
llevo el ritmico tumbao'
llevo el ritmico tumbao'
que hace que en el corazon

Y habia una isla rica
eclava de una sonrisa
soy de ayer soy carnaval
pongo corazon y tierra
mi sangre es de azucar negra
es amor y es musica

Azucar azucar negra
hay cuanto me gusta y me alegra
azucar azucar negra
hay cuanto me gusta y me alegra
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Figure 31. Celia Cruz' *Azucar Negra* from the Salsa 1AC.

Figure 32. *Salsa* 1AC Advocacy Rooted in Academic Literature.

In the spirit of Azucar Negra, vote Affirmative, because our performance accesses the root of Cuban economic engagement by beginning our analysis at the sugar plantations where it all began. The resolution calls for us to increase our economic engagement with Cuba, without getting to the basic question of what bonds Cubans, Dominicans, and Boricuas together; The root of our bond is the experience of the slave on the plantation. Only our Aff confronts the disconnect between America and Cuba and what it truly means to engage those people in those spaces.

Aparicio writes in 1999(Frances R. Aparicio 1999 The Blackness Of Sugar: Celia Cruz And The Performance Of (Trans)Nationalism is Professor of Spanish and Portuguese and Director of the Latina and Latino Studies Program at Northwestern University. She has previously taught at Stanford University, University of Arizona, University of Michigan, and University of Illinois at Chicago.)G.L

Her 1998 recording, Azúcar negra, and its title song, render the single utterance of 'azúcar' much more complex. While sugar is white, the seemingly oxymoronic metaphor of 'black sugar' foregrounds the traces of slavery behind the national economy of the plantation, a blackness that is indeed reaffirmed in the title song 'Azúcar negra'. The initial, ritualistic African-style drumming in this cut composed by Mario Díaz indexes the genealogy of blackness in Afro-Cuban music. Again, this song establishes a metaphor between Celia as a singing subject and Afro-Cuban culture. When she states that her blood is black sugar and that her skin is marked by the rumba and the bongó, this discourse inscribes Africanness and black agency on her body, the traces of slavery that facilitated the economy of the island. Significantly, the lyrics also identify the singing subject as the daughter of a rich island, foregrounding the association between slavery and capitalism and simultaneously suggesting the nostalgic discourse of the Cuban exile subject. Celia Cruz's musical repertoire is indeed an expression of afrocubanismo. Afro-Cuban vernacular poetics, including popular religious beliefs such as santería, popular oral traditions such as pregones and street slang, are the stylistic and discursive substance of many of Celia's songs. From the early hits with La Sonora Matancera, such as 'El yerberito moderno' and 'Burundanga' to the famous two-volume recording, Homenaje a los santos, which anthologizes some authentic African santería music with modern arrangements of songs dedicated to particular saints, Celia Cruz's music has consistently foregrounded the African legacy in Cuba's music, rhythms and cultural heritage. Her singing in African languages, particularly in lucumí, as in 'Lalle lalle' (Cruz, 1991) and 'Changó "ta veni"' (1989), her rhythmical dialogues with the drums, as in 'Quimbo Quimbumbia' (1969), and songs such as 'Azúcar negra' (1998),'Bembelequá' (1994), and 'La cumbanchera de Belén' (1989),which foregrounds the figure of the black rumbera and her dancing movements, are all traditional expressions of afrocubanismo at multiple levels. Salsa **hits such as 'Quimbara'**, according to Mayra Santos,'are basically a call to the dance floor, where the purpose of rhyme, rhythm, and lyrics is to bring to consciousness the act of salsa itself, an act of bonding where audience, dancers, musicians, and singers come together as a community of "entendidos"' (1997: 184). As the Afroboricua writer Mayra Santos suggests here, this particular song by Celia Cruz enacts the ritualistic task of creating a translocal, mulatto and black working-class community through the Afrocuban vernacular poetics and rhythms that inform many of her songs.

Figure 32. Salsa 1AC advocacy rooted in academic literature.

Figure 33. *Salsa* 1AC *Role of the Ballot* and the Significance of the 1AC Performance

The Role of The Ballot is who best performatively and methodologically uproots the plantation. Uprooting the plantation means to provide and embody a methodology that forefronts salsa as a starting point to understanding the foundation of US economic engagement with Cuba, the plantation. This starting point is the best, because it initiates the discussion and the social location of the slave working the field, and their method of survival.

We have proven that our bodies are the foundation of the plantation – The Cuban plantation, The United States Plantation, and the Policy Debate Plantation – Our bodies are the ones putting in the hard hours of work, the sweat, the blood, the tears, and the hard intellectual work that goes into the struggle for survival. Our bodies produce the goods that are then used to economically engage. We are at the root of all this shit, we make it grow. When you try to involve other parties, like the Federal Government, you produce poisoned fruit, because you exclude the people actually doing the work, The Cuban plantation is at the root of the research, epistemology, and scholarship necessary to effectively debate the resolution. We are a pre-requisite in terms of education and scholarship because all your literature assumes an ethic of the masters of the plantation. That ethic must be rejected. We are a pre-requisite in terms of starting point, because our Affirmative has proven that salsa is not only important, but necessary for us to manifest the hard revolutionary work, towards the goal of liberation. Additionally, salsa gets to the epicenter of all impacts and understandings of the Cuban plantation, and economic engagement. If you talk about the Cuban Plantation, if you talk about the economy, and you aren't talking about the slaves who put in the work to cut that sugar cane, than there is a problem with your policy proposal, and impact stories. This is the heart of the topic – the plantations of the past, and the plantations of the present remain to be an insidious and pervasive structure in our path towards liberation. There is a discussion that must be had, the root; the root of Azucar Negra, Black Sugar.

The performance of the 1AC seeks to provide a collective enunciation of the pain of the captive body. This allows us to lift the mental shackles of slavery.

Hartman 97[Saidiya, Scene of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America pg. 50-51] JRC

Exploiting the limits of the permissible, creating transient zones of freedom, and reelaborating innocent amusements were central features of everyday practice. Practice is, to use Michel de Certeau's phrase, "a way of operating" defined by "the non-autonomy of its field of action," internal manipulations of the established order, and ephemeral victories. The tactics that compromise the everyday practices of the dominated have neither the means to secure a territory outside the space of domination nor the power to keep or maintain what is in won in fleeting surreptitious, and necessarily incomplete victories. The refashioning of permitted pleasures in the effort to undermine, transform, and redress the condition of enslavement was consonant with other forms of everyday practice. These efforts generally focused on the object status and castigated personhood of the slave, the pained and ravished body, severed affiliations and natal alienation, and the assertion of denied needs. Practice is not simply a way of naming these efforts but rather a way of thinking about the character of resistance, the precariousness of the assaults waged against domination, the fragmentary character of these efforts and the transient battles won, and the characteristics of a politics without a proper locus. The everyday practices of the enslaved encompassed an array of tactics such as work slowdowns, feigned illness, unlicensed travel, the destruction of property, theft, self-mutilation, dissimulation, physical confrontation with owners and overseers that document the resistance to slavery. These small-scale and everyday forms of resistance interrupted, reelaborated, and defied the constraints of everyday life under slavery and exploited opening in the system for the use of the enslaved. *What unites these varied tactics is the effort to redress the condition of the enslaved, restore the disrupted affiliations of the socially dead, challenge the authority and dominion of the slaveholder, and alleviate the pained state of the captive body*. However, these acts of redress are undertaken with the acknowledgement that conditions will most likely remain the same. This acknowledgment implies neither resignation nor fatalism but recognition of the enormity of the breach instituted by slavery and the magnitude of domination. Redressing the pained body encompasses operating in and against the demand of the system, negotiating the disciplinary harnessing of the body, and counter investing in the body as a site of possibility. In this instance, pain must be recognized in its historicity and as the articulation of a social condition of brutal constraint, extreme need, and constant violence; in other words, it is the perpetual condition of ravishment. Pain is a normative condition that encompasses the legal subjectivity of the enslaved that is constructed along the lines of injury and punishment, the violation and suffering inextricably enmeshed with the pleasures of minstrelsy and melodrama, the operation of power on black bodies, and the life of property in which the full enjoyment of the slave as thing supersedes the admittedly tentative recognition of slave humanity and permits the intemperate uses of chattel. *This pain might best be describes as the history that hurts-the still-unfolding narrative of captivity, dispossession, and domination that engenders the black subject in the Americas*. If this pain has been largely unspoken and unrecognized, it is due to the sheer denial of black sentience rather than inexpressibility of pain. The purported immunity of blacks to pain is absolutely essential to the spectacle of contended subjection or, at the very least, to discrediting the claims of pain. The black is both insensate and content, indifferent to pain and induced to work by threats of corporal punishment. These contradictions are partly explained by the ambiguous and precarious status often black in the "great chain of being"-in short, by the pathologizing of the black body-this abhorrence then serves to justify acts of violence that exceed normative standards of humanely tolerable, though within the limits of the socially tolerable as concerned the black slave. In this regard, pain is essential to the making of productive slave laborers. *The sheer enormity of this pain overwhelms or exceeds the limited forms of redress available to the enslaved. Thus the significance of the performative lies not in the ability to overcome this condition or provide remedy but in creating a context for the collective enunciation of this pain, transforming need into politics and cultivating pleasure as a limited response to need and desperately insufficient form of redress.*

Figure 33. Mickey and John explain the Role of the Ballot and the significance of the 1AC performance.

John reflected on the complex significance of music being the soul of that affirmative argument and explained that "it's about building our own resources, it's about disrupting the space" and he and Mickey were able to change "the epicenter of the conversation," which "throughout history has always been the White European man, the cisgender man," which results in the privileging of "certain forms of knowledge production and that turns into the aesthetics" of those spaces. He further explained that "We have the certain rules of the university...So if we change those rules to favor a poor, Black woman, then those rules would be drastically different, right? If we changed them to be the immigrant worker, those rules would probably be in Spanish, right? So when we listened to music, we were changing the epicenter" (personal communication, June 26, 2015). Before Mickey and John's debates, John would blast Salsa music into the room where they were debating and said that they were able to change "the aesthetic of the room. Why? Because it's about disrupting the space and that's what music provides" (personal communication, June 26, 2015).

If John didn't know how to research, I highly doubt he would have been able to create the

Salsa affirmative. If John couldn't leverage both Spanish and English, I can't imagine Salsa would have been created. If John couldn't use music for composition, Salsa would never have been imagined. If Mickey wasn't such a deep storyteller and strong writer, Salsa would not have had come to fruition. Yet if John didn't know how to use oral language to convince Mickey and Rashad (Rashad was Mickey and John's primary debate coach) that the research illustrates how Salsa can be a valuable affirmative argument, I highly doubt John and Mickey would have been running the Salsa affirmative.

John said that at first Mickey and Rashad didn't see Salsa as being anything more than music; they didn't see how it could be an affirmative debate case for the Latin America topic. It was up to John to change their minds. He needed to leverage all of the resources he had at his disposal to convince them, which meant combining Spanish and English and multiple literacies: reading and annotating texts, listening to Salsa music being referenced in the literature, and then drawing on oral language skills to explain to Rashad and Mickey that what John was reading, writing and listening to evidenced how Salsa was worthy of being an affirmative case.

In an interview in the summer after his first year as an undergraduate in college, I asked John to tell me about how he developed the research skills to find all of the information he used for Salsa. "Was this a part of school?" I asked him.

John laughed and told me, "School doesn't teach you about Taylor and Frances" (personal communication, June 26, 2015), referring to the international publishing house that publishes academic books and peer-reviewed journals with an online platform to access content. When John made this remark about school not teaching students about Taylor and Frances, I thought to myself, *well why not*? *Couldn't it*? What might a high school research paper look like if kids in school knew about Taylor and Francis and knew how to use it? My mind wandered to thinking about oatmeal.

I eat oatmeal every morning. But I used to *hate* oatmeal. I saw no reason to start every day with something so bland and so boring as oatmeal. I only started loving oatmeal when I realized there were so many different iterations of it that I could create every morning by spicing it up with some of my favorite foods. I could take four organic apples, chop them up, peel some ginger, chop it up, combine the two ingredients in a large saucepan with some lemon, cinnamon, and raw honey for flavor and medicinal purposes. After cooking the medley in a covered saucepan on low heat for 20 minutes or so, with a little water to help the apples along, I ended up with this gorgeous, flavorful, nutritious, immune-boosting apple sauce to add to my oatmeal in the morning. Yet feeling that the oatmeal still didn't pack enough punch, I realized I could also add hemp, chia, and flax seeds, as well as organic yogurt to the mix. Sometimes I would use pears instead of apples. Sometimes I would add different berries or tropical fruit like mango. AMT told me to try using coconut water instead of milk; this made the oatmeal incredibly creamy and delicious! So I went from *hating* oatmeal to *loving* oatmeal and eating it every morning. But I needed more ways to cook it. I needed to be able to draw upon some of the foods I already loved. I needed to discover that there isn't just one way to cook oatmeal. I needed to discover that there are infinite possibilities for starting my day, not with something boring and bland, but with variety, flavor, and packed with nutrition. Could what the young scholars were telling me about the way they leveraged their languages and literacies in debate, provide some insight into some possibilities for transforming the bland and boring in other educational spaces? Maybe so.

What I do know definitively however, is that none of the young scholars' high schools had research databases like Taylor and Francis. To get access, they had to wait for the weeks when they would be at a summer debate institute hosted by a college or university, or the debaters had to get creative. They did both. They either leveraged their debate network and asked college students to share their user names and passwords, or they would get close enough to one of the city's universities to connect to their Wi-Fi, which would grant them access to the university's research databases.

John provided some insight into how he grew as a researcher in debate. He started researching himself because "it was definitely the desire to be a better debater. It was the desire to say, well I don't want my debate coach cutting my evidence, right?" (personal communication, June 26, 2015). This required that John become more independent and self-sufficient as a researcher. He recalls his first attempts as being very messy:

> I remember I had terrible looking cards at first. I remember I had a paragraph and I thought that was it. I thought that's what we need. And underlined the whole thing. And then I went back and perfected it and then went back and did it again. I remember the first argument that I quote unquote, cut, was when the Haitian uh earthquake occurred. And it was a disadvantage. It was a politics disadvantage, happening now. Haiti's earthquake. (personal communication, June 26, 2015)

John explains more about the evolution of his research skills beginning with that first argument he and Mickey researched and "cut" from excerpts from newspaper articles that were compiled on Microsoft Word at a business center at a hotel they were staying at during a weekend debate tournament. The argument they created argued that the funding for any affirmative plan would trade off with funding that needs to be sent to Haiti for earthquake relief. The argument wasn't written until Mickey and John did the research and composed it because the earthquake had just happened. It was this type of immediate need for creating new arguments or answering arguments that they lost to because they had nothing to say about them, that drove their research and eventually transformed them into their own coaches:

> Uh the affirmative plan wastes too much money. We need to send money over there. That was the first argument I ever cut with Mickey. I remember we were a hotel. We went to the uh business center and we cut some newspapers and we put it on the computer and we cut it under a Word doc and we did it. Right? I don't think we won on the argument. I don't think we even read it at any point, because we didn't now what we were doing. But we knew that, we we sought out that that politics that we were running at that time or we sought out that critique or we were just like, we need the card. We lost to this argument. And and researched, because debate is all about research, right? It's all about how you speak and all about that and and we were just like, we want to be better. Let's get these three books.
>
> And, and, and our [teacher-coach at Tremont] says it. He says that at one point he was no longer a coach. He was, he was buying us books. That's the only way of aiding us in the actual debate, right? He did the logistics, directing thing, but he bought us the books. I'd, I'd send him an Amazon list of like three or four books, he'd get them for me and I'd be like, thank you and we went to the debate rounds with those things and it was a win-win for all of us, right? So that's really what it is. (personal communication, June 26, 2015)

John talked about how he was in 8th grade attending a high school debate camp in Washington State (where he was told by another student that he was “the Blackest thing they got,” a fairly telling comment about the demographics of debate given how John is a super light-skinned Dominican) when he was first introduced to researching, including Taylor and Francis Online. At that time, John said his skills left much to be desired: “things would just fly past me. I'd pick up some things, I'd pick up the others but I, I'd be very slow with it because I was an 8th grader. A lot of these kids were 10th, 11th graders” (personal communication, June 26, 2015). He returned the following summer with Maria when he “started picking more things up;” but not until ILDI in the summer of 2012 did John see this change. “I could definitely say that by my 10th to 11th year, the year that I was at [the University] here, at the Institute, I definitely had grasped the idea of, of research" (personal communication, June 26, 2015). The instructors charged him with more responsibilities and his work ethic improved, complimenting his growth as a researcher and a student:

> Because we were one of the older debaters so the so they looked, uh the lab leaders looked on us to do the production of the evidence and I'd be able to sit down with my head phones diligently for two hours and be able to cut a 20 to 30 page file of whatever and look for PDFs and look for that and look for here and stuff like that, because people need to sit down and do their work and do their work, because like that repetition and that diligence is really what, what makes a good person, uh, a good researcher—even a good student. (personal communication, June 26, 2015)

John also remembers learning at ILDI in the summer of 2012, not to just read evidence "cards" (block quotes from other authors) for the entirety of an eight-minute speech. He told me,

> I remember uh even you and Rashad saying, too many cards. Too many cards. And I didn't understand that, because back then we were just like, we were a critical team, but we were going to read 30 cards about critical stuff, right? Not slow it down, tell a story, be fluent with it. (personal communication, June 26, 2015)

Over time they did "slow it down" and "tell a story." For *Salsa* he explained how since he liked how Mickey writes stories and how he writes affirmative cases, because "Mickey is a great 1AC[59]," John gave Mickey all of the research that John had compiled and annotated, and "painted a picture," telling him what to keep in mind when writing the 1AC: stay true to how they view debate as a space for a critical examination of the national topic, connected to the "real world" in which debaters are able to engage "theory and praxis," and be strategic in organizing the affirmative into different sections, each providing a different way to strategically win the round:

> remember that any given affirmative has to respond to our vision of debate. It has to respond to how normative discussions about debate are bad; and engage in the real

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[59] When John says, "Mickey is a great 1AC," 1AC stands for the "first affirmative constructive" and in this case, John uses it to represent the person delivering the 1AC—Mickey.

> world—a theory and praxis. We have to talk about the real world and we have to add a little bit different sections. So that if we're not winning *this* portion of the affirmative, we're winning *this* portion of the affirmative. If we're not winning either portion of the affirmative they're losing *these* portions of the affirmative. So my 2AR is either: there's no way you can vote for us, uh vote for them or, there is no way reason why you shouldn't vote for us, right? Both sentences allow us to win, but they're structure differently, offense, defense. So Mickey and I would always have a conversation, either through the phone or together, and we'd talk about what the affirmative should look like. He'd say this, naw, this yes, and this and the third. (personal communication, June 26, 2015)

Not only were they very thoughtful about what print-based research they would use as supporting evidence in their arguments, but they also exercised this same thoughtful selection when determining the music they would use as well:

> Um and I remember us having that conversation about just how we want to look at the affirmative, what research, what music we wanted to use. Because the research that I had was very guided toward certain music and we'd use those songs, so that when we heard a critique of music we'd be like, well that's not the music we're listening to. (personal communication, June 26, 2015)

John recalls one debate round where his opponents from an elite, predominately White private school, said that he and Mickey should lose because playing music can cause epilepsy: “I remember this one debater...They wrote a whole critique about epilepsy. We can cause epilepsy?” To answer this argument, John explains how he studied his opponents’ evidence. Debaters will generally have some lines in a piece of evidence in larger font as a visual cue for what to read out loud in the debate round. (If the debaters didn’t include some sentences, like using ellipses instead, this could be grounds for an ethics challenge and an automatic loss.) When John got his opponents’ evidence on a flash drive and copied it onto his computer (a common practice of evidence sharing during a round), he saw how some of the sentences in the evidence were in 12 or 13-point font while others were so small that they were unreadable—John wondered why. He increased the size of the font and realized that the evidence was not referring to Salsa music but rather to Sean Kingston and Jamaican music. John was able to argue that there was no connection between the evidence his opponents were reading and Salsa:

> We were like, okay. The text of the evidence was so funny, because they only had two cards out of the whole document that talked about epilepsy and the rest of it was about some other crap, about Bachata. I was like, that's not us. That's not us. But the cards were uh font 3, font 7, and then the rest of it, what they were actually reading, was like 12 or 13. When I increased the thing, it was about Sean Kingston and Jamaican music... it's just funny. It's funny. (personal communication, June 26, 2015)

Given the amount of research, discussion, and planning that went into creating *Salsa,* I asked John how long he thought it took him and Mickey to compose the affirmative into something that was ready for competition. He asked me to clarify: "Do I include the amount of hours that I had to argue with Mickey and my coach?" (John had jokes.) "About 10 to 20 hours," he told me. That's a long time considering John and Mickey lived in different boroughs and attended different schools. They occasionally met in person, but similar to Shakiya and Terrance's method of electronic collaboration for composing debate arguments, Dropbox and Facebook were critical.

Transportable and Transformative Language and Literacies

For Mickey, John, Terrance, and Shakiya, their dedication to learning was above and beyond what one might expect in a high school student. John talks about how he was always immersed in debate and therefore he was always reading widely, consistently, and independently:

> Everything we did was debate. It was surrounded in debate. Even in class, I mean in school, I'm sorry at lunch time, I'd always be cutting a card or something or I'd be sitting

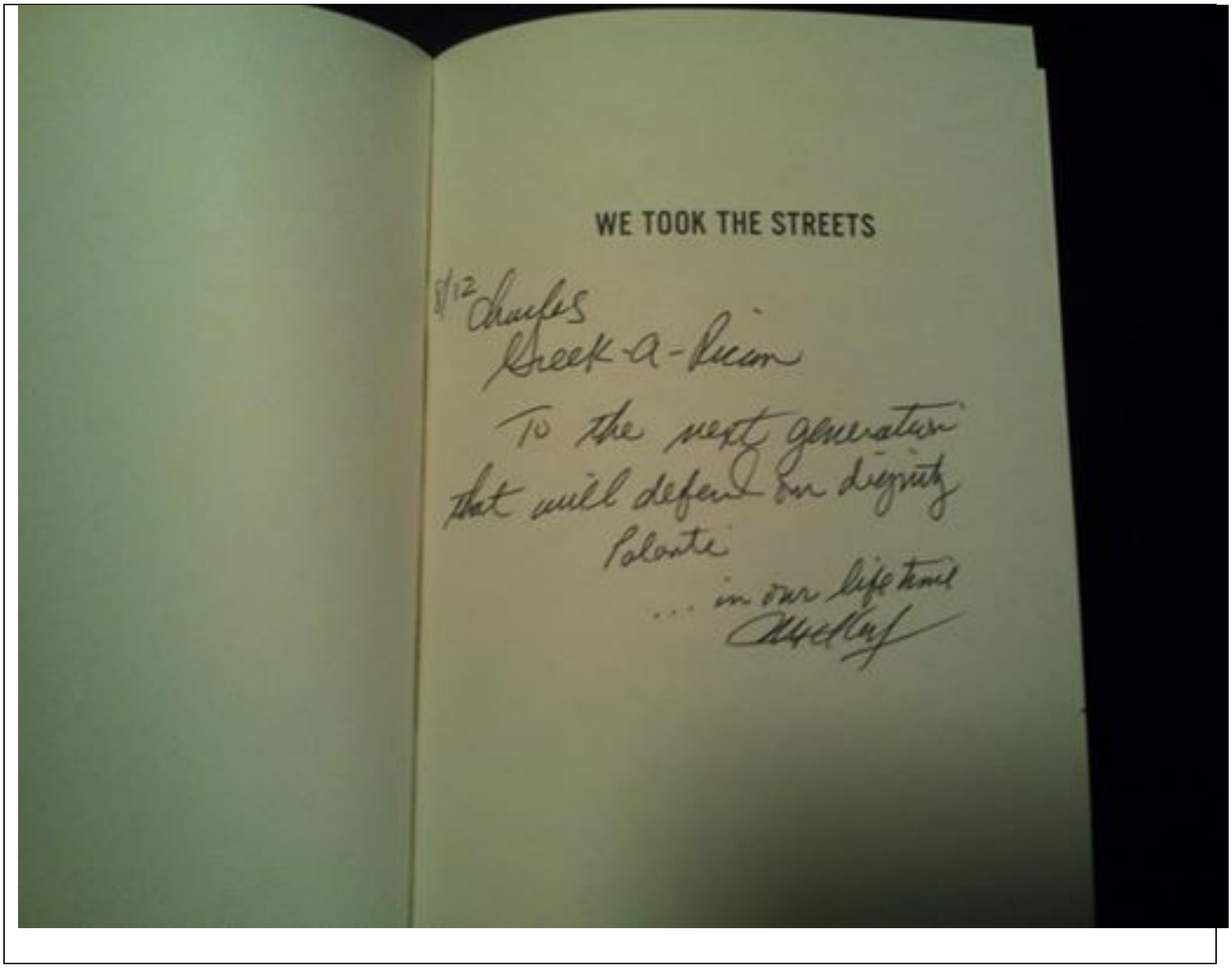
> in an office, or just have a book or two in my locker and take a book from, from my principal's office, who actually had a lot of books about pedagogy. She actually had a Sonia Nieto book and I said, 'I actually met her!' And she didn't believe me. I said yeah, she was, she was right there in that office (As we were interviewing at the University, John was pointing to the area in the library where Nieto spoke). (personal communication, June 26, 2015)

John would also attend academic talks. One was at the University around the time that we had the Debate Center and Sonia Nieto happened to be speaking. I told him about it and he rushed over to make sure not to miss anything. He introduced himself to her after the talk and talked with her about what he was debating. This was a common practice for all of debaters; they felt comfortable (and super excited about) approaching professors and academics, as well as policy makers and community leaders, and sparking up conversations around both of their research interests and work. And John felt that they thought he was knowledgeable. When he met Ta-Nehisi Coates, John said, "He and I spoke and he was like, *damn*! *This kid knows a lot*!"

Mickey had a signed copy of Miguel "Mickey" Melendez' book after contacting him in 2012. On Facebook, Mickey posted a photograph of his signed copy of *We Took the Streets: Fighting for Latino Rights with the Young Lords*, in which Melendez wrote: "Greek-A-Rican: To the next generation that will defend in dignity, Palante...in our lifetime." Mickey told everyone on Facebook: "Mickey Melendez :') # Completing Life Goals" (see Figure 34).

Figure 34. Mickey's 8/6/2012 Facebook post of his signed copy of Melendez' book *We Took the Streets.*

Mickey Melendez :') # Completing Life Goals



WE TOOK THE STREETS

8/12 Charles
Greek-a-Rican
To the next generation
that will defend our dignity
Palante
... in our lifetime

Figure 34. Mickey's Facebook post of his signed copy of Melendez' book *We Took the Streets.*

The debaters also talk about how debate helped them in school. Shakiya told me that debate was "*very time consuming"* but "*worth it"* because there were transportable skills between debate and school. She used *Black Gold* as an example of how she had to develop her analytical and critical thinking capacities, as well as different habits of mind to bring her feelings into what she was writing, which transferred over into her English classes:

> Debate is *very time consuming*, but it is *worth it* because of the interchangeable skills you have from debate and education in itself. So when we were writing you know *Black Gold*. As you can see it was only what we wrote, not evidenced based, so with that there was this whole you know critical analysis you have to think about getting from point a to point b, like what you *want*, what you see happening and what you want the angle to be. So then you know you have to analyze all of this stuff, you had to dig deeper because you had to just expand on your words, you can't say: I walked home from the train station and

> there weren't cops around. You have to heighten your senses. It's like you have to use your feelings along with your writing, too. So with English it helped a lot with like always writing essays and stuff like that. (personal communication, May 21, 2015)

Shakiya also talked about how inside debate (not inside school, unfortunately) Hip-Hop helped her and Terrance create powerful multimodal speeches that made people *feel* something. Hip-Hop was a valuable source of text about myriad debate topics, evidence (or original compositions) that could easily be encouraged in regular English classrooms to build connections between course content and students' interests, cultures and lived experiences:

> With Hip-Hop people are more open to talk about their—I don't know it's like, when you hear it, it comes over you in a way that you have your head boppin (she bobs her head), you start to groove, you start feelin it and the lyrics that's happening and then it's just an experience that you have to undergo to understand...I I remember that with Terrance and me, what we used to do was that we used to listen to different songs that would help with the aff or with debate in general. And it's just like, the love, with bell hooks, and Esperanza Spalding, that song is, *Amazing* in the sense that once you have other people listen to it, it's like they understand where you're coming from even if you didn't say those exact words. It's just like, *I don't know.* You are able to talk to others through this universal language. I can't really put it into words. Once you hear it and identify with what's happening in the song, and then you share it with other people and they have that same feeling and then you're like, woah, did that really just happen? And then you go on to explore different songs that talk about different topics, not only love and stuff like that, but gentrification and poverty and along that line. And when I listen to it and look around me, it's just like wow, this is *actually* happening, like the gentrification is actually happening and the poverty is actually happening and this is the same thing that's being talked about in hip-hop. So I, it's not that hip-hop is the only thing that is talking about it. There's Google and books, and other things. But hip hop is just, you don't, you don't do it consciously, but when you listen to the lyrics it actually does something to you, that when you look out to what's being said to you through your little headphones or whatever you're listening to, you can see that it's actually real. So, for me it's just that, when I'm walking from the train station, I see all these new apartment buildings, you know? It's really happening. It's not something that is new, so hiphop talks about all these things that's been happening: drugs in the black community, gentrification, poverty, sexism, racism, everything is not old, it's reoccurring. It just happens through what I see and hear.

John said that "Hip-Hop is knowledge production from the gutter, and I love it" (personal communication, June 26, 2015). And he loved it in debate because

> it smells, it feels, it looks, it just looks like everything they don't want to talk about...It's like Killer Mike says when he's on CNN and NBC, I mean on MSNBC: it's like y'all criticize Hip-Hop but y'all don't look at the circumstances that created it. So when I'm here talking about identity, when I'm talking about how the political government doesn't function for us, I'm using Hip-Hop because Hip-hop is the best method to not only disrupt their space but to communicate to a whole bunch of people." (personal communication, June 26, 2015)

Hip-Hop was a method for John to inject a different presence in debate that allowed for discussions about identity and different ways to speak back to politics of disposability, rupture spaces of homogeneity, and expand the possibilities for communicating more broadly.

Hip-Hop was a common language among UDL debaters. John recalled a scene from his first year in high school when he watched Hip-Hop debaters, Devonte Escoffery and Stephon Adams, aka Team Rev, debate in the round where they earned their last bid to the Tournament of Champions. John said

> We understood what we was talkin about. We all understood; man we weren't in the same school but we all understood. I'd be like, 'Yo, Stephon, I feel like this judge likes you and that judge, yeah' because we all had that shared feeling. We was bros. We was the homies and Hip-Hop creates that common hood. Hip-Hop outside and inside of the debate rounds.

John also explained how Hip-Hop is "*so* full of knowledge;" even the songs that get the most heat for their content, are laden with backstory, and with political and social commentary and critique—that is if you listen. As such, Hip-Hop provided an opportunity for the young scholars to practice critical listening, annotating, and leveraging texts in composition and debate. John elaborated:

> And then it's *so* full of knowledge, like even the worst song that advises you to sell drugs is so fruitful. Why?...So we had a resolution about, uh, crack-cocaine. The first song I put on is "Move that Dope." Why? Because I want to you address why we're talking about moving dope. Why, why are these rappers asking you to do that, right? And then if we

> just play it, and listen to the lyrics, maybe annotate it a little bit, maybe we'll understand. Maybe some politicians would definitely come to terms with the reality that they forced upon us in the 80s and 90s through the crack epidemic and the War on Drugs...since the 60s really. But, that, that's really why Hip-Hop is so integral; because it talks directly to you. You hear this music all the time. You're like, damn, I think that's about me. I think he wrote it for me. Right. And that's the song. It's not a love song, it's a sad song, so— it was crazy. (personal communication, June 26, 2015)

Through Hip-Hop, John was able to use evidence that spoke to him and also exposed histories and realities that can be shrouded from public or political vision.

Given all of these applications and more, John said that debate "definitely helped" academically. Debate had had already taught him about Aristotelian modes of persuasion and "ethos, pathos, logos" (special shout out to Toya's lecture from 2012, one of John's favorites), such that when he was learning rhetoric in the first week and a half in his AP English class, "I was like, been there, done that." And when they moved onto rhetorical devices, "Been there, done that, right?" Of course argument construction and "the difference between opinion and fact" was something he was well versed in because of his debate background: "Well, that's a debate card, that you have the tag, you have the cite, you have the evidence, you have the warrant, you have this, so it was always, it was great And for other lessons in composition, debate provided him with experiential knowledge and training such that he was actually studying for his tests in school while he was debating: "Because I'd finish that class on Thursday afternoon or a Friday afternoon and I was already on a trip to debate, so I was already doing my homework, right? I was already studying for the test. And it was great" (personal communication, June 26, 2015). Even for hard sciences, John explained how debate helped him with APA formatting and annotations: "And then when I went to science class and we had to annotate something in APA form or we had to uh discuss a certain uh chemical composition in front of class, I was able to do that, right? When we went to math class, the same thing."

Furthermore, unlike how many of the debaters viewed class in 2012, now John said school became fun—and he was really good at it, getting a “perfect essay” on his Global state exams: “And when we went to history class it was even fun. I loved Global, I got a 98 in the Global [exams], right? And I'm still wondering what question I got wrong, because it had to be a multiple choice. They had to take two points away on that so I got a perfect essay” (personal communication, June 26, 2015). At the same time, John saw how there was room for growth in some of his teacher’s pedagogies because of the lack of dialogue, where oral communication was sacrificed in the name of the written text: “It was always about the assignment, the written assignment. It was never about the linguistic version of it. It was never about dialogue and stuff like that” (personal communication, June, 26, 2015). At the same time, John had a heightened critical awareness of the larger discourses at play. He thought the emphasis on the written language at the expense of oral language and dialogue was a byproduct of the high-stakes standardized testing environment and the pressures it placed on teachers to perform, limiting the ability to think about the connections *between* different questions and answers on an exam, as opposed to seeing them in isolation as discrete units:

> Because the city’s education system really values the test taking method. It's all about testing and it's all about do you know the right and wrong answer, the 60 minutes I provided for you instead of how has the right or wrong answer engage with your day to day and so on and so forth? How does one, question one engage with question three? How does that engage with question 20, so an and so forth. It was never like that. And it's unfortunately. It's unfortunately. Sorry uh because people don't live in a 60-minute period. People don't live in that mechanism, right? People, everything is sticky. Like you're Jen when you go home and you wake up and you do this or you do that. They want you to be student 2742619 in the test but then they want to be John or you in another room or something like that so it's just like, I'm not a robot. (personal communication, June, 26, 2015)

Shakiya also said how debate helped her with English classes with respect to the “rhetorical analysis part of it because debate comes with a whole lot of new words that I haven’t ever heard before so you know have to keep going back to your dictionary" (personal communication, May 21, 2015). In terms of Advanced Placement U.S. History, while she admitted she still learned a lot in from her classes in school, she said she already knew a good deal of the course content before she took the class because of debate:

> I know that for my AP U.S. History course, it's just like, most of the stuff I already knew—the course was helpful, I learned a lot of stuff in there, too, but it's just like, I knew that *before* I got into class, like you know slavery, the whole *everything*, like when the cotton gin was made and you know the Civil War, the North and the South. I knew about Brown v. Board of Education, you know Little Rock Nine. I was like finding articles on my own and going over it. And there were YouTube videos that I was watching, that talked about it, and then I learned about Sarah Baartman and the Hottentot. All of the Presidents I learned through the course because I didn't really learn about that through debate. (personal communication, May 21, 2015)

John also explained that for each year he debated, six in total, that was

> six different topics of history, right? So it's six different status quo topics that are influenced by history at least. And that goes everything fro the environment to transportation to military to Latin American policy making. Uh to even space. So there's like a lot of history that I know, a little bit about everything. So it's just great. (personal communication, June 26, 2015).

Even outside of debate and school, the young scholars would use their literacies to compose and publicly share essays. Mickey would *consistently* use his debate skills to publish extensive essays on Facebook out of which he would incite and engage in heated debates with others, frequently around anti-Blackness. At other times he would post short and sweet commentaries about a new Hip-Hop album that had just dropped and its connection to debate arguments, like his post about Kanye West's album *Yeezus*, and its connection to anti-Blackness and afrofuturism (see Figure 35).

Figure 35. Mickey's Facebook post connecting Hip-hop with academics and sociopolitical commentary

June 18, 2013

> Yeezus is just a great album. It represents chaos. It undeniably explores the incoherence of blackness, and the vertigo that Kanye suffers as a black man. Even the creation of the alias, Yeezus, reveals the Afro-Futuristic side to Kanye's thoughts and art. Yeezus, his inner-god, escapes the shackles of this world, as a god cannot be contained by space or time, let alone be contained by an anti-black world that's "trynna kill King Kong". #Yeezus #Genius #BloodOnTheLeaves #NewSlaves #BlackSkinhead #MyTwoCents

Figure 35. Mickey's Facebook post connecting Hip-Hop with academics and sociopolitical commentary.

Terrance talks about the importance of having the time for “that self-reflexive mode” and where he could freestyle like an emcee and make connections like a scientist between arguments in authors’ texts and lived realities in his communities:

> can just spit stuff out on the fly. Like so when I can spit somethin out that I like its kinda like I can take that idea and go with it. But a lot of the, like the methodology and the speeches, the cases that I had, they don't exist in like an abstract state. Like the authors that wrote it are talking about people in my community, in our communities and I see things in my community in our communities, so I kinda like take experiences from those communities. And then like debate is kinda like where you are using those in an argumentative way, so just using them to facilitate larger arguments.

While it was easy for the debaters to talk about how debate was educational, it also created tensions between them and school. John said that, “It was a push pull factor. Because the debate teaches you that you deserve better. It teaches you that they're not doing enough.” Yet he also recognized that there were outside forces at work because he knew how to critically analyze the larger discourses in which schools are operating (Fairclough, 2010):

> I don't know if the educational system understands, but we're in an antagonistic situation, unfortunately—the teacher and the student. And the [city’s] education system unfortunately makes us into more of an antagonistic relationship because the teacher is demanding a lot from the student but the student either can't meet those criteria for a bunch of reasons, right, or, or feels as though they're not being appreciated, right?

Furthermore, John said that because “debate gives you the vocabulary and the feeling of a leader” and “debate allows you to say, well I've spoken in front of a bunch of people and I know a lot or a little bit about a lot of topics” that “people sometimes look towards me to be a advocate for something" whenever those antagonistic moves occurred between a teacher and a student. John said how his peers looked to him to represent their interests with teachers:

> It gave me a bad rap but the teachers were expecting me because I was always able to come after class and have that conversation. And they'd know that I'm speaking from a different level. I'm not speaking from the kid at the end of the class, right? I was never the one that, I was never the chatty Cathy like speaking to the person next to me, no. I was— the arguments that me and the teacher had were different than the kid who always wanted to go to the bathroom and disrupt that, right? Cus my arguments is uh, 'I can't believe you're giving us a test on Friday when we just reviewed this on Wednesday. That doesn't make sense, how are we ever going to do this? Or even have conversations about like the intricacies of our lesson plan or of the teaching method. How how and I supposed to understand, like you're not describing ... that's the arguments we had, not, let me go to the bathroom or, why can't I speak to my friend or why can't I have my phone. I never had that argument. I know I can't have my phone. (personal communication, June 26, 2015)

Regardless of the tensions, all of the debaters graduated, received scholarships, and matriculated into four-year universities where they are actively engaged in a number of activities. Mickey attends a private research university where he is a very successful college debater (winning is seemingly effortless at this point). John also is debating in college. He attends a public research university where he also works with the Black Student Union and the Latino Caucus, both of which are always making him think about how "debate really engaged with [his] understanding of race, race consciousness" (personal communication, June 26, 2015). Given his and Mickey's extensive literature base in Latin@ studies and their evolving understanding of identity that they developed over time in debate, John expressed how he felt conflicted in being classified a Latin@ because it appeared to gloss over important distinctions and differences within and across Central and Latin America:

> I started reading Juana Rodriquez, a professor at NYU, and then I started reading all of this Latin@-centered conversations. And then I started saying, fuck that Latin@ stuff. I'm not Latin@. Fuck that because every time we'd either speak about the Latin@, we're speaking from the narrative of a Mexican, right, and um then we started understanding how identity practice works and we see that the relationship that a Mexican has to a Latin@ is different from that of a Venezuelan, that of a Colombian and a lot of like other

> Central and and Latin Americans because they're more Europeanized. (personal communication, June 26, 2015).

As for the Crow Hill team, they are on point. Shakiya is getting all A's in her classes at the private liberal arts college she attends. At the beginning of 2015 she was the elected Sophomore Class President. She is involved in so many different clubs and student organizations it's hard to keep track. Terrance is on the poetry team, and the debate team (although he continues to bridge the two in his own compositions) at an Ivy-League University. Terrance was also the graduating class valedictorian at Crow Hill High School. His speech was a reflection of his nickname "Mr. Griot:" a blend of debate, poetry, Panama, Blackness, Spanish, English, Black English, Hip-Hop, brilliance, youth, depth, criticality, remembrance, hope, and love. And Ima pass him the mic.

Graduation, May 2014

The auditorium is packed and filled with the sheer joy and excitement of the Crow Hill High School graduating class of 2014 and their families, friends, younger classmates, teachers and administrators. Bryce, Terrance and Shakiya's English teacher and debate coach stands behind the podium and begins her introduction:

> Good night esteemed guests…I am introducing to you all a distinguished gentleman, Mr. Terrance. To introduce him to you, I could say he was prom king. I could talk to you about his amazing scholarship that he received for his school of choice, Dartmouth University, after turning down his full ride to Posse. I could talk about him making debate history, not just here at Crow Hill, but also for [our city], being one of three teams in the [city] that qualified for the Tournament of Champions, being the top speaker in the nation which allowed him to meet *our* President, President Barack Obama. (Cheers and hollers from crowd). I can also talk about him receiving a proclamation from the City. But Terrance is a humble man and doesn't like to make a scene. And yes I said man because this is what I've seen him morph into during these past four years. So the best way to introduce this young man to you is through a poem.
>
> There comes a point in time where the learning does not happen within these four walls, the four walls of Crow Hill High School—where neither I nor any of my colleagues are lecturing; where state mandates are weights in quicksand—*that* is where the real learning happens.

> There is a point where the dictatorship of Bryce has relinquished its reign and I am forced to sit and take notes. *That* is what you did to me. Never did I expect that I would become the student. You were the kid they said looked like D Wade, berzerked. Smart. But much more than your intelligence, a level of maturity that rivaled some of the adults. A level of academic stamina that is the epitome of learning...Never giving up. Never backing down. Always challenging. And that is when I became your student. An open book willing to learn from you. Learning that some fallacies are meant to uphold the norm because the resolution is just an idea and not a mandate.
>
> At the end of the day, we are all Griots, who dispense *Black Gold*, and that is the love of the topic. And that Hip-Hop isn't about the one or the two, it's about being true to you, metaphorically understanding that the space *here* is really about out there. Silently high jacking the sanity of *anyone* who daringly crosses your path to love. A path where we find Prodigey, printed on a fitted, purposely spelled with an *e*—refusing to be corrected—because that *e* was the extra that you gave to anyone who came into your presence. That *e* meant the exchange, because in education, there has to be give and take. And what you gave extended far beyond the classroom. Partnered in pseudo-apathy, and rubric and insanity. Cus at the end of the day, it was just a couple of us, hangin out in my room, then taking random trips to the shuttle, discussing life over jelly-filled honey buns and oatmeal raisin cookies.
>
> So, in this so-called life, I'm glad that someone put me in your class where I was able to learn from you. So although I may miss you as an impeccable debater, as an unorthodox student, as a phenomenal leader, and most importantly, one of my four adopted children, I know that you will excel. So to the graduating class, parents, guests, colleagues, I present to you Mr. Terrance.

Terrance, the valedictorian of the Crow Hill graduating class of 2014, walks up to the podium, beaming. He stands tall at the mic in his purple gown and cap and gold rope draped around his neck. Before beginning his valedictorian speech, he lets out a confident, aspirated "ha" of a champion. Huge smile. Wide eyes. Beaming.

> **Terrance:** Good afternoon friends and families who have come here to celebrate this occasion with not only the students you have arrived here with, but also with those that you have not. It is the support that comes from people such as you all, that helps, and has helped these students amount to success as seen in these caps and gowns today. (Terrance takes a long pause and utters an audible sigh).
>
> So I say today congratulations not only to all of the graduates but to all of you have come to support them. I'll start with my Thank You's. To Crow Hill High School faculty who have held it down for me for four years, especially Ms. Robinson, who has been really supportive and helped me get to the point where I am now at the upcoming Ivy League college, Dartmouth University. Thank you to the debate team—Bryce, especially for that speech. You know (smiles and makes the gesture of wiping a tear from his left eye), tryin not to shed a tear. Bryce, Jen Johnson (points to me), who is also here in the crowd, and even Sharmat (puts his hands behind his back) who was also

> supportive, too. And also my partner, Shakiya, who is also a senior graduating, too. (The audience claps). Cus even though we had our ups and downs, we handled business this year and we made it to the Tournament of Champions together.

Terrance chokes back tears and pauses for what felt like several seconds. I hear someone in the audience, maybe Bryce, say under her breath: “breathe, breathe.”

> Thanks to Mr. Brown who functioned both as a literal mentor and a figurative one. And thanks to all those students who kept class live, intriguing and invigorating, whether it was jokes, questions, music, or help with work. They made Crow Hill the environment that it was. And a special thank you to my mom, because even though we fight a lot—and we always get aggravated with each other on a daily, weekly basis—it’s a fact that she’s here in the crowd to support me that says a lot to me. And my last thank you is to all of my family that have passed away during my high school years that sometimes discouraged me but other times motivated me to keep going and go stronger so I can be a better person with morals, standards, and live life better than others.
>
> I think the hardest part about giving a speech is finding a way to say a lot in a little time. Then again, the best way to share your speech is to share your time, our time. This is not *my* moment, but *our* moment of remembrance.
>
> Now we not only remember the bad times—the struggles, the homework problems, the teacher problems, relationship problems, the problems we will always speak of, or the problems that will never be spoken of—but we also remember those good times. Now is when we embrace those who haven’t held our hands, but held our hearts; those who stood by our side when others weren’t around; those who may not be our day one people, or two, three or four—you might have recently met them but they have proven their value in your life and your growth. We no longer hold grudges, but rather learn to let go. Not only let go of the pain that peers have caused, but also let go of the peers that cause pain. There will always be people in your life who will be parasitic off of you: the people who will lie and the people who will deceive, and the people that will distract. You *all* need to let them go when you graduate.

Terrance pauses again for 1.5 seconds before he continues to breathe rhythm and poetry into his valedictorian speech.

> Just like Langston Hughes spoke of dreams,
> We can’t let our aspirations dry up like a raisin in the sun
> Don’t let your dreams fester
> You chase
> You achieve
> We can never help *those* who are not willing to help them*selves*
> The saying is bringing a horse to water but being unable to make it drink

While the audience claps, Terrance adapts—he is used to adapting to judges in the debate round to make sure they hear every word—and patiently waits for the crowd to settle down before he picks back up.

Instead we must reprioritize

What we have come to understand

Are our *squads* and our *crews* and our *clicks.*

A multitude of students clap loudly and scream, "Yeah!!!" which is met by a quick chuckle from Terrance.

> These don't have to be what schools define as the *smartest* people. And they don't need to come from the *best* neighborhood or have the *greatest* background, but they have to be individuals who can hold your hearts: the people who are capable of lifting you up instead of pulling you down; those who you—those who keep you on the right path and support you like invisible pillars; these need to be individuals who will support your dreams. And don't let them sit as wasted potential but utilize them as a foundation whether you're going to work, college, or have post secondary plans. You don't have to search for these people because you won't find them hiding on street corners, staircase B, the second, third or fifth floor; you'll find them in your moment of remembrance. You remember those with the strongest of smiles, those who were pleasant of feelings, the loudest laughter. And there, there is where you will find your pillars, your happiness, and your support.
>
> Don't let dreams turn to addictions but convictions.
> Release your hatred
> Account or temporary
> On this moment of memory
> Mature for the better and stay true to your word
> While we find happiness hidden in the brightness of smiles.
>
> Two o clock in the mornin
> Late night conversations
> Resound like *church* bells
> While some shed tears
> And some scream and yell
> Yet remember that
> Mirror reflections remind us that we are all gods and goddesses
> And we see it every time we look past our dark and light skin into our tranquil eyes
> When we tell our fondest stories
> It'll be those that we remember when we were most alive

And for me, it was when I found you
Thank you
And thank you
And thank you

The audience claps and hollers for twelve seconds after Terrance ends his speech. Terrance brought them to church. I expected no less. Nor did Bryce who, as Terrance's teacher, knows she was also his student. Not only does the debate format position students as teachers in the front of the room while their teachers and community members sit in the back as judges, taking notes, providing only time signals over the course of a 64 minutes of students speaking, but the teacher-coaches spend extended periods of time with young scholars who debate at weekend tournaments. Over the course of two, three, or even five-day national tournaments (as was the case for the Tournament of Champions as well as Round Robin tournaments), on buses, trains, and airplanes to tournaments, and at breakfasts, lunches, dinners, tournament preparation meetings, and in huddles before debate rounds, victory dances, and sometimes somber, and at times heated tournament debriefs, teacher-coaches spent hours upon hours with their high school debaters. And this was just the time spent at tournaments, which was in addition to the time spent during the week at after school meetings, at lunch, in class, or over instant messenger or text in the evenings. Even though Bryce and Sharmat, the two teacher-debate coaches at Crow Hill High School, alternated weekends as the designated teacher-coach who would travel with Terrance and Shakiya at weekend national tournaments (I coached the scholars at all national tournaments for three years, except for one or two each year due to scheduling conflicts with my own graduate studies), given the amount of time that the teacher-coaches and their students spend together, everyone gets to know each other very well. We have a chance to see each other grow. We have the privilege to see how our language and literacies develop, evolve, and are used over time in different ways, in different contexts, and to achieve different effects. And we are privileged to see the way we change as people, as a result.

Qualified General Conclusions

All four students were engaged in serious ontological and epistemological work their senior year. They all felt a sense of purpose for reading, researching, writing, viewing, listening, collaborating, and speaking: social and personal transformation and liberation. The young scholars were actively engaged in regular dialogical exchanges in which they collected, synthesized and shared original research rooted in theories, empirical research and reflected their multifaceted and changing identities and sociocultural locations. The young scholars drew from a wide range of texts from documentaries to music, and policy reports to peer-reviewed journal articles, to compose speeches from which they were able to test ideas and challenge each other in order to support and push one another to find and practice ways to leverage language and literacies to be critical and powerful advocates for themselves, each other, and issues of import to them. The four students saw their vocabulary expand as well as their confidence in public speaking. They also demonstrated how they possessed metacognitive knowledge about a wide range of topics and discourses, languages, and identities. And by the end of their senior year, it is clear that the four debaters developed strong identities as critical public intellectuals and leaders.

In their senior year, the debaters developed a deeper awareness around language precision and they pushed each other to be more precise in their ways with words in order to improve their clarity around how they can use their languages and literacies for social change, as was evidenced in the cross-examination in the quarterfinal round at the beginning of this chapter. Aside from the evidence that is discussed and aside from a few sentences from printed texts that are quoted here and there, oral language makes this cross-examination possible. Strong oral language skills coupled with critical analysis enabled the debaters to push for more language precision. This suggests that there may be a net benefit to English classes that incorporate more activities that afford students with opportunities to engage in cross-examinations as a potential way for students to think more deeply and critically about not only the topics, but also the words that they use and how those words can be wielded in their service, or against them.

Even as their language precision increased, so did the frequency of their meshing of languages and discourses from Hip-Hop to Salsa, from Black English to Dominant American English, from African American rhetoric to a classical Greek tradition and the discourse of competitive academic policy debate. Mickey and John won 93% of all of their affirmative debate rounds during the 2013-2014 debate season. And Terrance and Shakiya can't recall loosing any more than two preliminary rounds the entire year. Clearly the debaters were able to articulate their arguments in ways that were intelligible and persuasive to their judges or there is no other way that they would have been able to achieve such records (let alone grades, scholarships, and Ivy-league status). Furthermore, all four students were able to use all of the languages and literacies to compose cases that required extensive research, meaning that the debaters had to read voraciously and have a high level of comprehension and ability to synthesize a wide-variety of texts across a range of academic disciplines. This exposed them to new vocabulary, concepts, and topics that complemented and supplemented what they were learning in school. All of this counters the logic behind English-only curricula and assumptions that students should code-switch or lose their home and community languages in order to develop competency and mastery over the English language, not to mention how our students' languages and literacies can be used as resources for creating linguistically and culturally pluralistic texts that reflect the linguistic and cultural pluralism and new literacies of the 21st century.

Hip-Hop continues to be drawn upon as evidentiary support and as a resource for the creation of multimodal texts. And, while Jazz was infused into *Black Gold* in chapter five, Salsa not only animates John and Mickey's affirmative case on the Latin America topic, but it is the subject around which they are able to compose a counter-dominant historical narrative about United States economic engagement with Latin America and highlight the way that Salsa has been used as a bridge to foster community and kinship among Latin@s and African Americans. What might compositions look like if English classes encouraged students to take the Blues, Jazz, Punk, or Hip-Hop and use it in a similar manner for writing informational or persuasive essays?

The data also suggest that there are digital resources that can be highly effective for supporting our young scholars' academic and critical literacy development. Research databases like Taylor and Francis Online, can open up a world of academic texts that can be used by our young scholars as a way for them to critically research and create compositions. Dropbox and Facebook are platforms that can facilitate research, digital conversations and academic collaborations, and the creation and dissemination of multimodal compositions that can provide a platform for our young people to share their critical research with users around the globe.

A major leap from where they all were in June of 2012, at the end of their senior year, all of the debaters firmly identified as scholars and leaders who had a justified confidence in their own voices, and intellectual, cultural, and linguistic worth; who are independently motivated to research, read, write, and speak widely with purpose; who collaborate with others to co-create knowledge and share with others; and who are looked upon as leaders and teachers, and as such are committed to use their languages and literacies for social change. The data suggest that this is largely attributable to the fact that there was a platform for the students to develop critical oral language literacy in combination with new literacies, to develop, share, challenge, and refine their scholarship and creative cultural production.

When John is tapped in to mediate conflicts between his teachers and fellow classmates, this is not because John is expected to write his teacher, he is expected to *talk* to her or him. When John meets with Sonia Nieto and is able to have a conversation with her about research, he is able to do so not only because he is well read, but also because he knows how to use oral language. John and Mickey also carve a space for the meshing of Spanish, English, music, and academic language through the multimodal *Salsa* composition, which they deliver orally with musical accompaniment. When Terrance brings the graduating class of 2014 to church, it is not just because he is reading words on a page; he is making those words come to life through oral language, through Nommo. Shakiya is able to unleash her strength, compassion, leadership, and brilliance as a Black woman because she is able to wield her literacies with oral language to share counter-dominant histories, establish her connection with other strong Black women leaders, assert her self-worth to others who might have disparaged her, and communicate with others her research and ideas around Black feminist standpoint epistemology, love, and praxis. Through researching, composing and sharing *Love*, Terrance replenishes his well of resilience that waters his deep ancestral roots that affirm his humanity, his Blackness, his *Black Gold*. He uses his language and literacies to protect the love in his heart that helps to fortify his psyche against depression and the hate, gratuitous violence, general dishonor and dehumanization of anti-Blackness such that he has the will to critically think, research, analyze, compose, and orally share "counter-dominant strategies" for access and liberation, for himself and others.

The centrality of oral language, language meshing, Hip-Hop/Salsa/Jazz, and new literacies in the development and use of the young scholars' academic and critical literacies points to some potentially untapped possibilities for teaching and learning literacy and English(es) inside and outside of schools. It also suggests some new directions for research in formal English classrooms. The next and final chapter will discuss these connections, including their challenges, limitations, and possibilities for cultivating literacies of access and liberation in the 21st century.

Chapter Seven: Implications of the Study for Cultivating Literacies of Access and Liberation in the 21st Century

Introduction

Chapter seven begins with a summary of findings from chapters four through six, including a description of the nature of the ILDI community and its practices. This is followed by an explanation of the significance of those findings for updating English and literacy education in the 21st century, including recommendations for educators, teacher educators, school leaders, and policy.

Summary of Findings

The findings revealed that it is possible to develop powerful language and literacy trainings and opportunities that can build upon and extend our young people's every day languages and literacies, including Hip-Hop culture and music, to strengthen academic discourse, civic engagement, and broaden the discourses in which our young scholars are conversant. Findings also point to the significant role of oral language and debate in learning, exploring and composing, as well as the importance of expanding academic discourse and knowledge of self through a hybridity of languages, literacies, rhetorics, discourses, and cultures.

Participants in this study were developing and using language and literacies academically, critically, civically, creatively, socially, and personally. Over time they were expanding the language and literacies in their repertoires and drawing on all of them within and across different contexts for teaching and learning, critical research, composition, communication, creative cultural knowledge production, speaking truth to power, social change, and self-love. There was power in hybridity.

Furthermore, this hybridity—the young scholars' use of multiple linguistic registers, literacies, and rhetorics—was informed by and informing the contexts in which the young scholars were debating and navigating the world. Across the data, the debaters were invested in exposing and discussing methods to eradicate anti-Blackness, White supremacy, hetero-patriarchy, and capitalism in debate and in the larger society. The participants' texts informed and were informed by the context of developing and using language and literacies in competitive academic high school policy debate and the context of living in a White supremacist, anti-Black, hetero-patriarchal, and capitalist society (see Figure 36).

Figure 36. The context of developing and using languages and literacies among the young scholars.

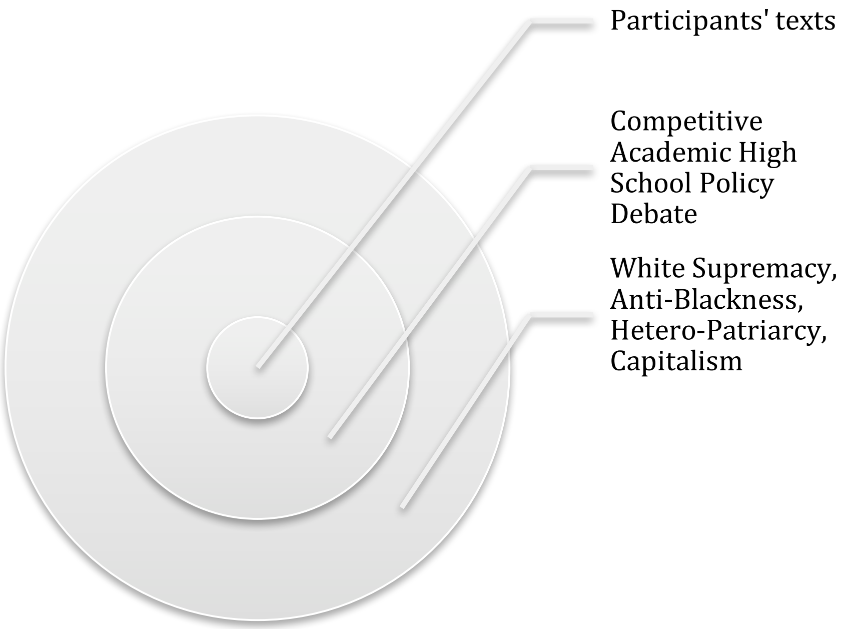

Participants' texts
Competitive Academic High School Policy Debate
White Supremacy, Anti-Blackness, Hetero-Patriarcy, Capitalism

Figure 36. The context of developing and using languages and literacies among the young scholars.

An additional similarity across the data is that over time, the participants also changed in their roles and responsibilities in the same community of practice (see Table 9). They started out as scholars learning, and gradually assumed new roles as co-instructors, judges of novice debaters at tournaments, coaches of novice debaters at their school, and then later as judges and coaches of high school debate, and instructors, coordinators, and assistant directors of high school debate institutes.

Table 9

Focal Participants Changing Roles and Responsibilities Over Time

Scholar	ILDI 2012 June	ILDI 2012 August	2012-2013 School Year	2013-2014 School Year	2014-2015 (post high school)
John	Scholar learning	Scholar learning, teaching & leading ILDI Fellow co-teaching novices Presenting to preservice teachers Participant in ILDI public debate	Scholar learning, teaching & leading Judged novice and middle school debate Qualified for Tournament of Champions Received scholarship to a national debate institute	Scholar learning, teaching & leading Judged novice and middle school debate Taught at UDL summer institute Qualified for Tournament of Champions Accepted to research university Awarded college scholarship	Scholar learning, teaching & leading Started college Competed in college debate Judged high school varsity debate Taught at national debate institutes
Mickey	Scholar learning	ILDI Scholar learning, teaching, organizing, leading ILDI Fellow co-teaching novices Presenting to preservice teachers Participant in ILDI public debate Established Young Scholars Organization	Scholar learning Scholar teaching: Judged novice and middle school debate Qualified for Tournament of Champions Received scholarship to Dartmouth Debate Institute	Scholar learning, teaching & leading Judged novice and middle school debate Published extended academic essays on Facebook Taught at UDL summer institute Qualified for Tournament of Champions Accepted to research university Awarded college scholarship	Scholar learning, teaching & leading Started college Competed in college debate Judged high school varsity debate Published extended academic essays on Facebook Taught at national debate institutes
Terrance	Scholar learning	Scholar learning, teaching, & leading Presenting to preservice teachers	Judged novice and middle school debate Received scholarship to a national debate institute Presented at academic conference Qualified for UDL Nationals Met President Obama	Scholar learning, teaching & leading Judged novice and middle school debate Coached novices at Crow Hill Guest instructor at ILDI summer institute Qualified for Tournament of Champions Accepted into Ivy League College on full-ride scholarship Graduating class valedictorian	Scholar learning, teaching & leading, organizing & directing Started college Competed in college debate Judged high school varsity debate Assistant director of ILDI summer institute Taught at national debate institutes Presented at academic conference
Shakiya	Scholar learning	Scholar learning Leader organizing ILDI public debate	Judged novice and middle school debate Presented at academic conference Hired by ILDI	Scholar learning, teaching & leading, organizing & directing Judged novice and middle school debate Coached novices at Crow Hill Coordinator and mentor for ILDI summer institute Taking college courses in high school Accepted to four-year college Awarded college scholarship	Scholar learning, teaching & leading, organizing & directing Started college Judged high school debate Elected class president

Table 9. Focal Participants Changing Roles and Responsibilities Over Time.

While the data reflects a particular community of practice, the intellectual and sociocultural labor presented in this study, is work that can be extended beyond competitive academic high school policy debate and adapted for any educational space in which young scholars are immersed in a community of practice in which there is a similar type of mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998). Within that community, students would need to be provided with regular guidance and opportunities to practice, build upon, extend, and refine their language and literacy practices by developing a new tool kit (see Figure 37). This kit contains critical and social theories, empirical research, and the tools to critically comprehend and leverage languages and the many modes and functions of texts in the 21st century. Using these resources, students can conduct, produce, and engage in debates around critical research; in doing so they can develop a public presence as scholars with authorial authority who civically engage around the investigation of problems and potential solutions to issues that are directly relevant to the young scholars' lives and social justice. The power of this tool kit is that it embraces hybridity and possibilities instead of forced singularity and limitations. There are multiple languages: Dominant American English, Black English, and Spanish; multiple cultures: Hip-Hop culture, competitive academic policy debate, Salsa, and Jazz; multiple texts: documentaries, peer-reviewed journal articles, music, books, and personal narratives; and multiple authorities, academic intellectuals, organic intellectuals, and personal narratives. There is reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, recording, and producing and academic, critical and digital literacies. There are critical and social theories, empirical research and practice; Greek and African-centered rhetorics; dominant and counter-dominant cultural practices and histories. The kit contains the language of the academy and the language of the streets. And the kit has tools to navigate power as well as critique it; it has resources for understanding and integrating politics as well as supporting politics of resistance.

As educators, we can guide our students to recognize the value in and ways to use oral language, personal narratives, history, music, culture, digital technologies, writing, reading, listening, viewing, and producing in the critical exploration of self, the past and present, and in designing social futures (New London Group, 1996). Our classrooms can be spaces in which our young people can explore past and present struggles *as well as* the accomplishments of people who look and speak like them, such that those explorations can be pathways for ontological growth and the discovery of new possibilities for social change. Educators can support our young people in drawing on all of the resources at their disposal in locating, examining and producing texts around course content in such a way that provides room for students to bring in their own interpretations, creative and critical capacities, social locations, and interests. And in facilitating students' study of a particular topic or engagement in a class activity or lesson, there are many types of texts that can be used in conjunction with and not at the exclusion of another; for Immortal Technique's *Poverty of Philosophy* compliments and adds texture to informational texts about Latin America like Galeano's *Open Veins of Latin America*.

From Hip-Hop to Salsa, deeply rooted cultures around music give birth to texts that can be academic resources to develop and share a deeper and more nuanced understanding of subjects under examination. Using Hip-Hop, Salsa, and Jazz as modes of argumentation and forms of presentation, from *Reparations* and *Black Gold* to *Love* and *Salsa*, the young scholars were exposing oppression, composing counter-dominant narratives and critical research, and painting a more complete picture of the genius and linguistic, cultural, creative, and intellectual wealth, and as well as possibilities in the communities and histories from which our young scholars come. And these histories and possibilities were both shaped by and helped to shape the community of practice.

The Community of Practice

The community of practice that was the focus of this study consisted of instructors who were masters of their craft: professors, college debaters and coaches, Hip-Hop teaching, recording and performing artists, policy makers, and lawyers, all of whom had roots in urban debate, either as debaters or coaches. While they were experts in their respective fields, when instructors felt less versed in what the students were interested in researching, instructors tapped into their own networks to supplement instruction, as was reflected in how DSRB recruited two professors who specialized in Queer theory and Chicana feminism to Skype into the institute. The students being apprenticed in the community were high school debaters who had aspirations ranging from becoming professional artists and lawyers to being English teachers, and social entrepreneurs.

While young scholars in ILDI were preparing for participation in a competitive activity, the nature of ILDI community of practice was communal. The community prioritized team work and collaboration; learning was not about pitting the students against each other in a hierarchical competition for rewards (Grace, 1984); learning was about collective uplift which necessitated freedom for literacy and literacy for freedom (Perry, 2003). The community was oriented toward cultivating the knowledge, habits of mind, dispositions, environments, languages, and literacies necessary for access and liberation. By providing opportunities to develop and practice applying academic, digital and critical literacies, the community was a “training ground” for scholars, activists and leaders (Mickey, August 25, 2012). Toward these ends, instructors viewed learning as socially-situated (Lave, 1996, Lave & Wenger, 1991) and something that should be fun and meaningful. English varieties were seen as assets, not deficits; and students’ sociocultural worlds, experiences, practices, perspectives, and modes of learning, perceiving, and communicating, were welcomed in the classroom, as they were considered valuable resources for learning and teaching. Composition was viewed as a process, not a product (Murray, 1972/2009). Students were positioned as growing scholars and activists; all instructors had high expectations for every student and believed in their excellence. Instructors understood education as something that was political and ideological, and as such, students were regularly supported in critically engaging in ontological and epistemological questioning and analyzing relations, institutions and configurations of power, not just for the sake of critique, but for transformation. There was a deep commitment to supporting one another in the process of refining language and literacy practices for self empowerment and collective emancipation, and for cultivating new debaters and the next generation of teachers of debate. And, most important, community members functioned as a family who loved each other. John called it a "beloved community" in which "There was a lot of love. There was a lot of love" (personal communication, June 26, 2015).

The inherent practices of the community included being able to:

(1) Generate ideas for research.
(2) Construct an argument, which includes knowing that all claims need warrants or reasons for why the claims are true, with proof to back up those reasons.
(3) Use critical and social theories to inform conceptual frameworks for critical research.
(4) Research across a range of texts and disciplines.
(5) Comprehend, annotate, summarize, and synthesize research through reading, writing, questioning, discussing and debating.
(6) Apply different modes of persuasion and composition from Greek (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990) and African rhetorical traditions (Richardson & Jackson, 2003, 2004). This includes African rhetorical practices of incorporating musicality/rhythm, emotional

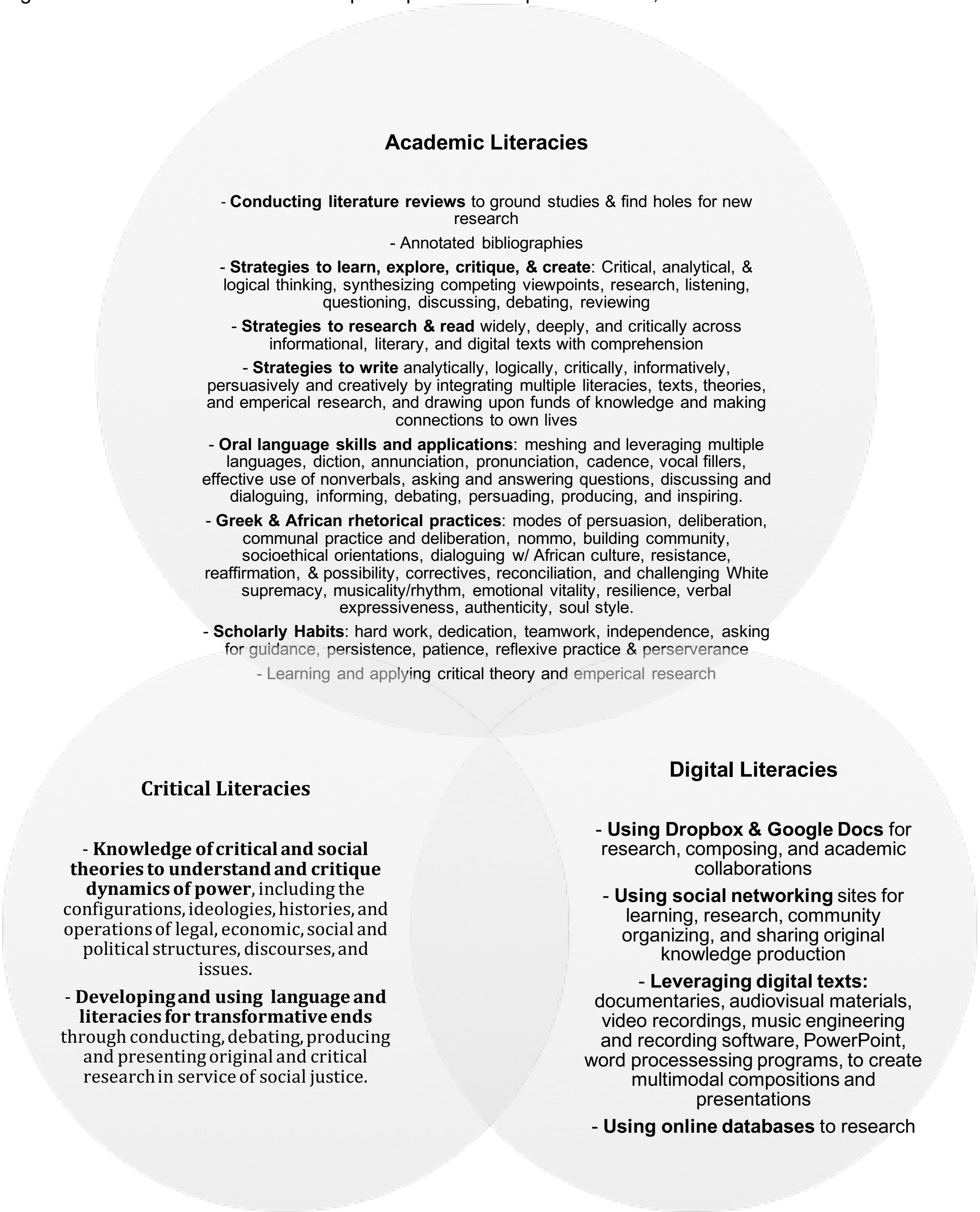
vitality, resilience, verbal expressiveness, authenticity, and soul style (Asante, 2003), communal practice and deliberation, nommo, self-understanding and self-assertion in the world (Karenga, 2003), digital rhetoric (Banks, 2011), historical and cultural preservation, building family and community, socioethical orientations, and dialoguing with African culture (Karenga, 2003), rhetorics of resistance, reaffirmation, and possibility, correctives, and reconciliation, that challenge White supremacy (Asante, 2003), and work in the interest of solidary, reciprocity, freedom, and to benefit all of humanity (Karenga, 2003).

(7) Compose, produce, and share original critical research, using all of the languages and literacies in one's tool kit.

(8) Use knowledge, research, language and literacies for personal and collective access to higher education, gainful and rewarding employment, and civic spaces, and advocate for social, political, economic, and cultural transformation and liberation.

In order to develop, sustain, and apply these practices within and beyond ILDI, Hip-Hop culture, as well as Salsa and Jazz, were used not only as text, from evidentiary support to modes of presentation, but to create home spaces and "change the epicenter of the conversation" (John, personal communication, June 26, 2015).

Figure 37. A New Tool Kit: Literacies participants developed over time, as indicated across the data.



Academic Literacies

- **Conducting literature reviews** to ground studies & find holes for new research
- Annotated bibliographies
- **Strategies to learn, explore, critique, & create**: Critical, analytical, & logical thinking, synthesizing competing viewpoints, research, listening, questioning, discussing, debating, reviewing
- **Strategies to research & read** widely, deeply, and critically across informational, literary, and digital texts with comprehension
- **Strategies to write** analytically, logically, critically, informatively, persuasively and creatively by integrating multiple literacies, texts, theories, and emperical research, and drawing upon funds of knowledge and making connections to own lives
- **Oral language skills and applications**: meshing and leveraging multiple languages, diction, annunciation, pronunciation, cadence, vocal fillers, effective use of nonverbals, asking and answering questions, discussing and dialoguing, informing, debating, persuading, producing, and inspiring.
- **Greek & African rhetorical practices**: modes of persuasion, deliberation, communal practice and deliberation, nommo, building community, socioethical orientations, dialoguing w/ African culture, resistance, reaffirmation, & possibility, correctives, reconciliation, and challenging White supremacy, musicality/rhythm, emotional vitality, resilience, verbal expressiveness, authenticity, soul style.
- **Scholarly Habits**: hard work, dedication, teamwork, independence, asking for guidance, persistence, patience, reflexive practice & perserverance
- Learning and applying critical theory and emperical research

Critical Literacies

- **Knowledge of critical and social theories to understand and critique dynamics of power**, including the configurations, ideologies, histories, and operations of legal, economic, social and political structures, discourses, and issues.
- **Developing and using language and literacies for transformative ends** through conducting, debating, producing and presenting original and critical research in service of social justice.

Digital Literacies

- **Using Dropbox & Google Docs** for research, composing, and academic collaborations
- **Using social networking** sites for learning, research, community organizing, and sharing original knowledge production
- **Leveraging digital texts:** documentaries, audiovisual materials, video recordings, music engineering and recording software, PowerPoint, word processessing programs, to create multimodal compositions and presentations
- **Using online databases** to research

Figure 37. A New Tool Kit: Literacies cultivated over time in the apprenticeship as reflected across the data. The overlapping circles indicates the interplay between all of the literacies.

These practices address the need to account for and make use of the growing cultural and linguistic diversity in our classrooms, work life, and civic spaces. These practices take advantage of the many different types and functions of texts in the 21st century. Moving away from a dichotomous, overly simplistic, static, monocultural, and monolingual conception of literacy development and English education, these practices welcome hybridity: linguistic, cultural, and discursive code-meshing, multimodality, multiple literacies, logic and creativity, theory and practice, and dominant and non-dominant histories, narratives, and ways of knowing. These practices can enable students to develop the complex and sophisticated literacies that are expected outcomes of English education, and they can expand the resources available for doing so: for meaning-making, critical comprehension, research, composition, production, and communication. Students can be encouraged to be their whole selves; they can develop literacies and languages that will enable them to get a recording contract *and* write a master's thesis. The development and application of language and literacies is not just for one type of access, but for linguistic and discursive dexterity, and for personal and systemic transformation and liberation.

Recommendations

These findings suggest that literacy achievement is not doomed to be stratified along the lines of race, ethnicity, class, gender, gender identity, geography and citizenship. Additionally, in a time in which Black Lives Matter has emerged in response to the publicized manifestations of gratuitous violence against and murder of Blacks and Latin@s, and Trans Lives Matter has emerged as a result of the rising fatal degradation of transgender people in the U.S., and Refugees Matter has emerged in response to xenophobic public and political outcries against accepting Syrian refugees, to engage in critical epistemological and ontological questioning as educators and to create similar opportunities for students in our classrooms and research is indispensable. Many students have to deal with the reality of poverty, anti-Blackness, patriarchy, heteronormativity, ableism, xenophobia, and linguistic and religious discrimination, on a daily basis. As educators, it is essential to understand the unique context in which our students are navigating the world before and after they enter our spaces of learning. This is important both in terms of knowing what they are having to deal with that might serve as challenges to teaching and learning, and point to additional types of support that might be needed beyond the traditional curriculum, but also how students might be able to use these challenges as resources for learning and creative, critical, intellectual and cultural knowledge production. Educators can seriously attend to the languages and literacies that students need to navigate a world hostile to shades and languages of difference, and to be able defend themselves while speaking back to injustice and generating solutions. Young scholars can also bring their experiences to bare in conversations, activities, and assignments in which they are learning something new or in compositions they are creating. This can in turn facilitate opportunities for students to establish connections between what they are learning and what they already know, and transform conditions of disposability into opportunities for critical research, to make new discoveries and produce new knowledge, all of which can simultaneously help students gain access to institutions of power and work toward social transformation.

Yet before enacting any education reform that seeks to build upon the findings of this study, educators, teacher educators, school administrators, and policymakers should take into consideration several necessary preconditions and possibilities.

Recommendations for teachers. Debate and oral language, Greek and African rhetorical traditions, digital literacies, Hip-Hop culture, and critical and sociocultural approaches to language and learning can create possibilities for devising innovative pedagogies and supporting powerful Englishes. Educators can:

- Develop an understanding of sociocultural theories of language and learning which entails adapting pedagogy to reflect how learning is socially situated and that students' sociocultural worlds, everyday languages and literacies, and experiences are assets to be further developed, built upon, and extended to enrich and scaffold learning and future opportunities.
- Recognize the value of code-meshing and the indispensability of oral language and hybrid literacies in teaching and cultivating powerful literacies. Toward this end, composition can be seen as dynamic, multimodal, a process, and a way to cultivate multiple literacies of access and liberation. This would entail providing ample opportunities for students to practice composing using oral language and multiple literacies across and within different contexts and in different ways to achieve different effects.
- Recognize that "to study ideas is not to consume ideas but to create and recreate them" (Freire, 1985, p. 4) and this necessitates participatory and generative learning environments. At the same time, one must recognize that education is not politically or ideologically neutral; providing students with literacies of access does not inherently mean that students will live happy, meaningful and liberated lives. Providing uncritical access might inadvertently cause the evisceration of students' linguistic and cultural wealth and critical and indigenous ways of knowing, and it also might mean creating pathways for students to blindly enter into and reproduce unjust systems, institutions, and unequal social relations, without the tools to critique or work at transforming those conditions.

- Be creative and open about textual choices. If the young adult novel, *The House on Mango Street*, could be the inspiration for high school students diving into peer-reviewed journals, documentaries, ethnic studies, and practicing composing the then publically sharing *No Culture Left Behind*, then what possibilities might other young adult novels hold? If students studying transportation infrastructure investment and Latin America can use Jazz, Salsa, Hip-Hop, spoken word, and critical theory, to generate ideas, make meaning, evidence arguments, annotate and synthesize critical theory and empirical research from peer-reviewed journals, create conceptual frameworks for critical research, and produce multimodal compositions like *Reparations*, *Black Gold*, *Love,* and *Salsa*, imagine what other possibilities could emerge with other topics.
- Provide opportunities for students to learn the tools of critical research and use them to compose multilingual, multicultural, and multimodal texts.
- Create opportunities for students to have some freedom to choose what to research, compose and produce, which includes the freedom to select from a vast range of textual modes, using all of their languages and literacies at their disposal to create and share new knowledge. The findings from this study points to how this practice supported young scholars in reading widely and critically across myriad texts with increasing levels of comprehension and sophistication over time.
- Bring in teaching artists, community leaders, recent high school graduates, and high school students in developing and supplementing curriculum. This can help create an extended community of practice and network of support for growing scholars and leaders.
- Exercise creativity in working within curricular constraints in order to apply any of the

above in designing pedagogy and curricula.

Recommendations for teacher educators. To support the recommendations for teachers, teacher educators can incorporate critical debate and oral language into the training of preservice teachers, which would include supporting preservice teachers in reflexively integrating theory, research, and practice.

To this end, the course I created and taught at Teachers College, Columbia University, on debate and oral language in English language arts, was modeled after the work done at ILDI. Preservice teachers engaged in debates around language, literature, popular culture, rhetoric and composition. Grounded in African American and classical Greek rhetorics, sociocultural and critical education theories, and empirical research on debate education, teacher-scholars actively engaged contemporary uses of debate and oral language to promote literacies of access and social justice. The class also focused on the roles played by new media and popular culture in the development of composition skills and critical literacies. As the course was highly participatory in nature, with students partaking in structured debates around course content, I trained students in written, oral, and multimodal argument composition, refutation, the art of questioning/cross-examination, and critical research. For the midterm, students adjudicated a live or prerecorded debate on a topic relevant to teaching English (most chose to adjudicate the demonstration debate round about Hip-Hop education conducted by Maria, Terrance and John and Mickey at ILDI in 2012 for preservice teachers of English). Students then wrote a paper explaining their process of adjudication and the connection between the debate and course concepts. The final project was an evidence-based debate tournament lasting several days on a student-generated education topic. For example, in one of the classes the teacher-scholars designed the following topic: *Resolved: The New York City Department of Education should* *significantly improve academic achievement in English language arts.* Drawing from course texts and trainings as well as students' individual research and practical experiences outside of class, each student constructed their own case reflecting their original researched ideas for improving academic achievement and social justice in ELA. As students debated different methods to transform classrooms, students consistently expressed how they had never felt more motivated to attend class, research, and think about new ways to incorporate speech and debate into their own classes to meet content goals and support critical consciousness.

While the course I taught at Teachers College was geared toward teachers of English, given the importance of oral language in literacy development, teacher education programs can make a course in oral language and debate available across disciplines. Additionally, as teachers must be able to effectively use oral language to teach, teacher education courses can provide more opportunities for preservice teachers to practice oral language.

Furthermore, given the lessons available for teaching and learning among students and teachers outside of schools of education, teacher educators and schools of education can consider bringing in teaching artists, community leaders, recent high school graduates, and high school students in supplementing and developing curriculum. As was done at ILDI, high school debaters and teaching artists can work collaboratively to conduct or help facilitate a public debate for or among preservice teachers.

At the same time, as this work with preservice teachers of English in applying oral language and critical debate into their English classes is an emerging area of research and new to the field, there is a space for further research with teachers who are infusing these practices into their classes in order to investigate the related pedagogical implications.

Recommendations for school administrators. School leaders can also engage students as critical public intellectuals and leaders and prioritize the development of literacies of access and liberation. To this end, administrators can support speech and debate teams, but minimally, they can support training and opportunities for students to develop oral language skills and engage in and publically share rigorous and critical research. This can include creating courses and activities to teach the tools of critical research, which can include providing access to online research databases like Taylor and Francis, JSTOR, and EBSCO, as well as lifting policies that block access to social networking sites like Facebook and YouTube that can be used for scholarly collaborations, learning, and producing knowledge. To further support critical research and oral language development, school leaders can:

- Entrust teachers with curricular and pedagogical freedom such that they can apply any of the above recommendations for educators in designing pedagogy and curricula. This can include being open to different modes of assessment ranging from oral language performance and debate to multimodal critical research projects.
- Support block scheduling to allow for more meaningful and substantive engagement with course topics through critical research and debate. This could mean providing opportunities for interdisciplinary co-teaching, like between a social studies teacher and an English teacher, as one example.
- Create platforms for youth to share original and creative cultural and knowledge production because students are more motivated when they feel there is purpose to what they are creating.
- Consider ways to support students in having school-wide debates on issues that emerge around policy, coursework, current events and other issues of importance to the students.

- Allow opportunities to invite teaching-artists, community leaders, and high school graduates into the school as part of curriculum development or as artists- or leaders-in-residence.

In terms of schools with debate programs, students participating on the debate team during the school year can receive course credit as they would for an Advance Placement course in English and/or history. For the debaters who attend summer debate institutes, given the amount of seat time required for their participation, school leaders can give students course credit and even work with the host universities of the institutes to give students college credits.

Recommendations for policy. Professional organizations and policy makers can take a number of approaches to support oral language development and literacies for the 21st century. Educational organizations like the National Council of Teachers of English and the Conference on College Composition and Communication, can issue oral language policy statements to reinvigorate investment in oral language in the teaching of English and composition. Organizations and policy makers can enforce *The Students Right to their own Language* (CCCC, 1974) and ensure that new policies are not in violation of these rights, this necessitates a serious reconsideration of the ethics of standardized testing, not to mention whether the tests can even come close to effectively measuring the literacies needed to navigate in a linguistically and culturally diverse, globally connected, and technologically rich world. Furthermore, as more and more teachers express a painful lack of curricular freedom as they experience the mounting pressures of teaching to the test and value-based models of assessment, policy makers can work to resist the deskilling of teachers and free them to design curriculum and use other forms of assessments that can embrace oral language, multimodality, linguistic and textual hybridity, and literacies of access and social justice.

Given the changing nature of language and literacies in the 21st century, as well as the persistence of literacy opportunity gaps, schools can also be provided with more resources, which includes ensuring that schools have tools for students to engage in critical research, multimodal compositions, and debate. These resources include libraries, access to research databases, classrooms with state-of-the-art computer technology, and funding for speech and debate programs.

Recognizing Possibilities Within Limitations

Some might call this study a victory narrative because Black and Brown youth are growing as scholars and leaders and teaching and learning in powerful ways. There must be more to the story. Maybe the focal participants were geniuses. Maybe the dust was swept under the rug. Or maybe this sounds like a victory narrative because the youth are Black and Brown; and Black and Brown youth aren't expected to be scholars and leaders because they are Black and Brown—as goes the master narrative. There is more to the story. There always is. But the rest of the story, or the rest of the data, don't contradict the findings around powerful teaching and learning in this community of practice.

Furthermore, some might call these recommendations utopian; I call them a reflection of the findings and actions that can be taken that are by no means impossible. As I used to rhetorically pose to the debaters, if we can't envision the world in which we want to live, how can we get there? We have to be realistic; but we can also have the courage and imagination to make what others might consider impossible demands. These demands not only prevent the suffocation of imaginative possibilities and new directions in the teaching of English, but they can also shed light on the limits of our current moment that need to be challenged and lifted.

All of the focal participants, as well as the instructors in this study recognized that poverty, anti-Blackness, patriarchy, linguistic discrimination, as well as curricular constraints, restricted educational opportunities and reproduced inequalities. While this is no doubt true, at the same time, these conditions cannot be used as the sole excuse for opportunity gaps or as justification for dismissing recommendations to adapt practices evidenced to work. Educators, school leaders, teacher educators, and policy makers can still push on within limiting situations to create communities of practice with opportunities for students to develop and leverage oral language skills, debate, Hip-Hop, everyday languages and literacies, digital technologies, hybrid and multimodal literacies, and critical research in the development of academic literacies and civic engagement. Yet while working within the limits of our situations, we must always keep our eyes on the larger prize of eradicating the conditions and mechanisms of oppression. Indeed, the possibility for transformation only benefits when we free our young people to critically use all of their languages and literacies at their disposal to research, read, write, speak, listen, view, discuss, debate, explore, discover, and compose and produce new knowledge. We can arm our young scholars and leaders with the language and literacies necessary to create and share critical research with those in power, to integrate power, and to mobilize others to critique and transform configurations of power that produce, reproduce, and give sustenance to inequalities and oppression. Cultivating literacies of access and liberation is in the service of immediate needs as well as those that will emerge far into the future. Instead of foreclosing on opportunities for our young scholars to use and extend all of their assets, and learn and act upon the world to transform it, we can expand academic discourse to reflect, honor, and encourage Black Gold, foster self love, embrace Hip-Hop, Salsa, Spanish, and Black English, and allow for hybridity. We can help our students fill their tool kits with languages and literacies and so that, like Jay said, our students “can be academic and still be creative.” We can certainly keep a reserve of critical hope on deck while maintaining our focus on seeing the opportunities of our present, and the endless possibilities of our future for a truly participatory, just, humane, sustainable, and radical democracy. As Nas said, “All I Need is One Mic.” Pass the mic. Our young scholars and leaders got next.

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